60 Best Sources for Buying Direct

PC Computing

JULY 1994

WINDOWS 4.0 TEST DRIVE

CHICAGO

Here's your first **hands-on** look at the easiest and **most powerful** Windows ever—better **get ready!**

100MHz!

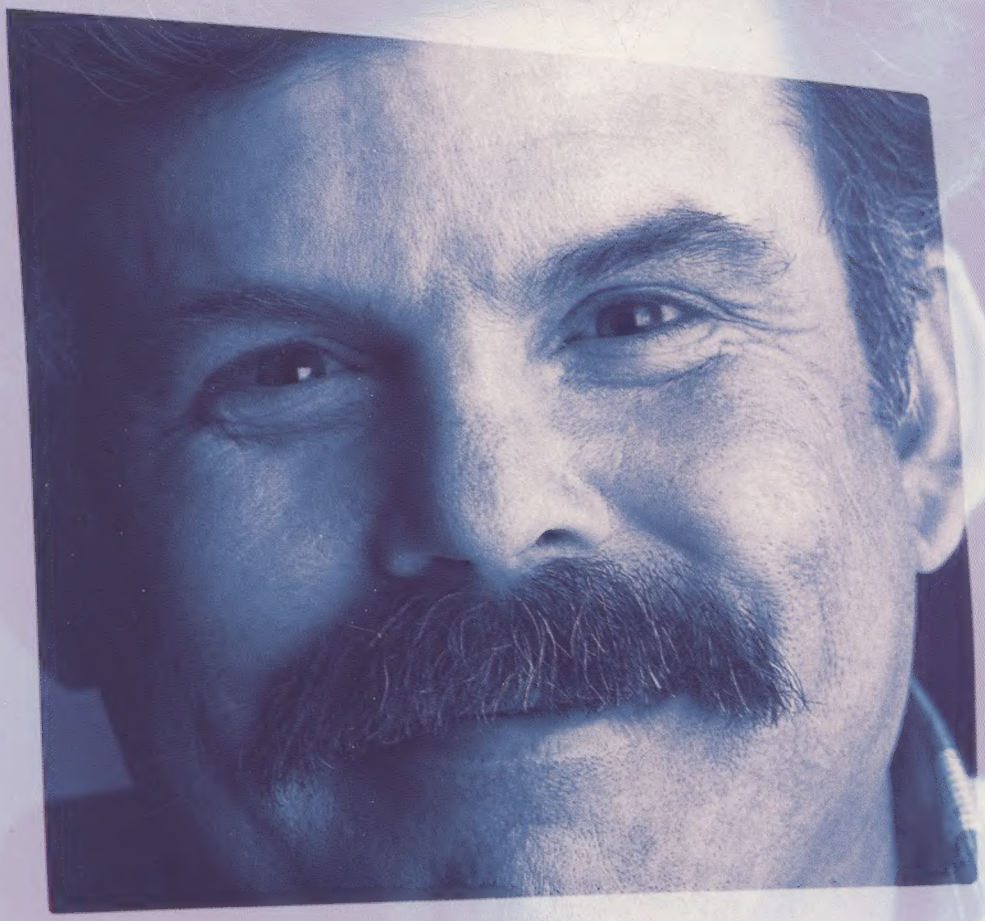
Red-hot CPUs burn up the desktop **118**

Exclusive
First test of dBASE for Windows **152**

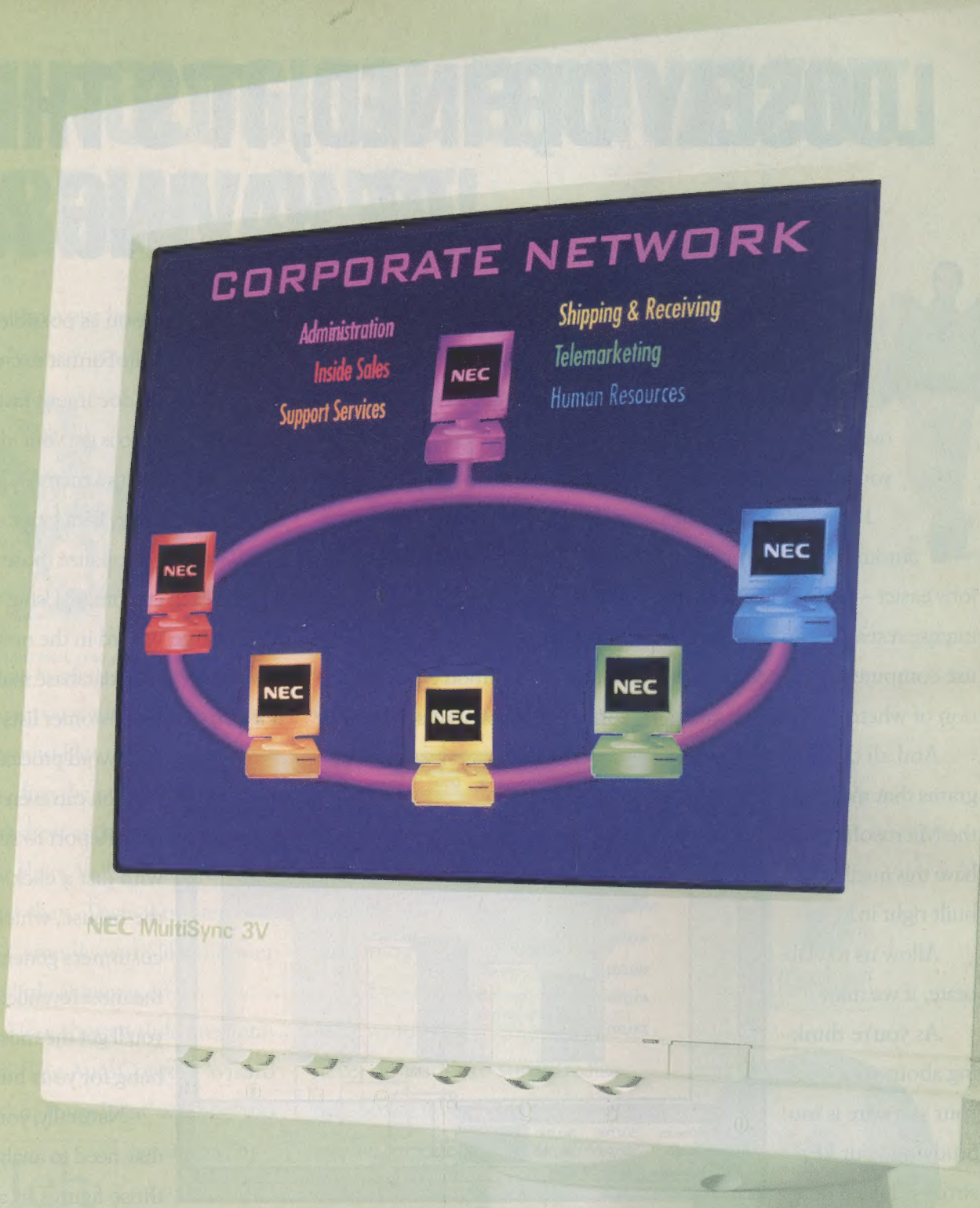
Technolust
Power toys for power users **306**

Ten hours per day.
One hundred and thirty words per minute.

Fifteen hours today.
Sixty-five overnight packages. Tonight.



Two hundred and sixty-five hours this month.
Twenty-eight days out of college.



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They're the people you count on to get the job done. From secretaries to shipping, they need all the help you can give them. Luckily, the 15" (13.8" diagonal viewable area) MultiSync® 3V and the new 14" (13" diagonal viewable area) MultiSync® 2V give them the bright, sharp images you'd expect from an NEC MultiSync monitor. You also get MPR II compliance, Mac and PC compatibility, high refresh rates and resolutions up to 1024 x 768 NI, all with a 3-year limited warranty. It's more than you'd expect at such a great price. But then again, you're probably used to getting the most for your money. Questions? Call 1-800-NEC-INFO. Or, for information via fax, call 1-800-366-0476 and request document #153501 and #143201. **The easiest monitors to live with for hours and hours: Ours.** NEC

MultiSync 2V

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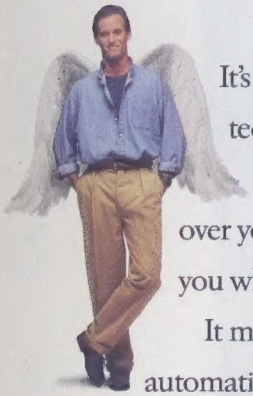
Optional cable adapter, required for Macintosh connection, available free from NEC. MultiSync is a registered trademark of NEC Technologies, Inc. The Energy Star emblem does not represent EPA endorsement of any product or service. © 1994 NEC Technologies, Inc.

LOOSELY DEFINED, IT'S THE T
OF HAVING A G



It's called IntelliSense™ technology. Simply stated, it watches over you and even helps you when you need it.

It makes routine tasks automatic and complex jobs easier – a direct result of intense research into how people use computers. And an indication of where the future is going.

And all the programs that make up the Microsoft® Office have this intelligence built right in.

Allow us to elaborate, if we may.

As you're thinking about your work, your software is too. Studying your keystrokes. Taking notes. Sensing what you want to do and making suggestions. Even doing a hundred or so of the everyday processes for you.

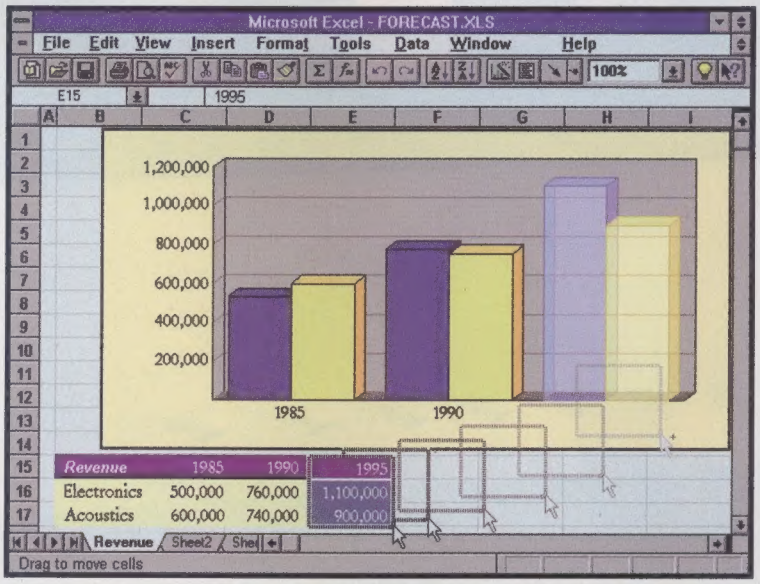
What does this mean? You save time. You're more productive. But you've no doubt heard this before. Let's get to the specifics.

The TipWizard™ assistant watches you work and suggests easier ways to do things.

Say you're writing a letter in Microsoft Word. With a feature called AutoCorrect, your most common typos can be corrected as you make them. For example, "teh" is automatically replaced with "the." Or you can use it as a high-tech shortcut. Just type "asap" and it's replaced with the words "as soon as possible."

Then hit AutoFormat to create a great-looking document fast. All you have to do is get your ideas down and click, it's a memo. Click, it's a report. Click, it's a letter.

Want to personalize those letters for each customer? Using the Mail Merge Wizard in the new Microsoft Access® database makes it a snap to link customer lists to your word processor.



Charts and graphs can now be changed in a single step. All you have to do is drag your new data into place, drop it, and everything is updated automatically.

You can even use AutoReport to see, with just a click of the mouse, which customers generate the most revenue. So you'll get the most bang for your buck.

Naturally, you may need to analyze those figures in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. Great. You can look at customer data in a variety of ways with PivotTable™ dynamic views. By product, quarter, region.

*Support for the Microsoft Office is no-charge; however, normal telephone company charges apply. Microsoft support services are subject to Microsoft's then-current prices, terms, and conditions, and are subject to change without notice. Mail workstation license (server and software must be acquired separately). For information only: In the 50 United States, call (800) 894-6642, Dept. JGF. In Canada, call (800) 563-9048. Outside the U.S. and Canada, call your local Microsof

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UARDIAN ANGEL.

Any way your heart desires.

Now say you have some new

Wizards track your every move and guide you step-by-step through a variety of tasks.

figures you want to add to a chart. Drag-and-Plot makes it easy. Step one, drag the numbers from your worksheet and drop them into your chart. Voilà, there's your updated chart. There is no step two.

Certainly, work like this merits a little showing off.

How about a slide presentation? The AutoContent Wizard that's in PowerPoint® will help you get started by organizing the structure and content of your most common presentation topics (selling your product, for instance).

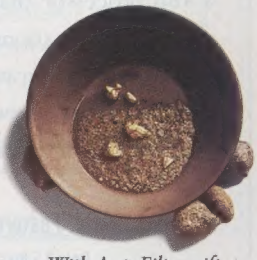
Teh

The

With AutoCorrect, commonly misspelled words are corrected in a blink.

But perhaps the smartest aspect of these best-selling programs is this: They are the only products of their kind that have unlimited product support with no service charge.*

Which brings us back to the point we made a few hundred words ago: Only the Microsoft Office does so many things to make your job easier to do. Because only the Microsoft Office has IntelliSense technology.

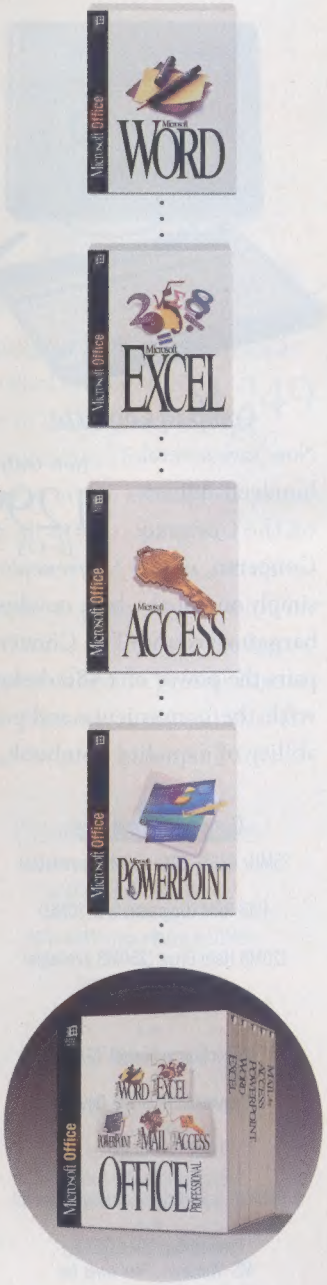


With AutoFilter, sift through a spreadsheet to find specific nuggets of information.

Of course, mere words can never do justice to software like this. So we invite you to visit your reseller, or call us at (800) 894-6642, Dept. JGF, for the name of a computer store near you.

After all, it never hurts to have someone watching out for you.

In this case, it just happens to be your software.



Microsoft Office

994 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved. Microsoft Office Professional, shown here, includes: Microsoft Excel, Word, the PowerPoint presentation graphics program, the Microsoft Access database management system and a idiary or (206) 936-8661. Customers who are deaf or hard of hearing can reach Microsoft text telephone (TT/TDD) services by calling (800) 892-5234 in the United States or (905) 568-9641 in Canada. Microsoft, PowerPoint and

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Now save several hundred dollars on the Compaq Concerto, quite simply one of the best notebook bargains around. The Concerto pairs the power of a 486 desktop with the convenience and portability of a quality notebook.

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25MHz 486SL (DX), (33MHz available)
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9.5" Monochrome Backlit VGA Display
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Convenient Pointing Device
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Preinstalled MS-DOS® 6, MS-Windows, PenPower for MS-Excel, InkWare NoteTaker, and TabWorks

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*Or $50 per month**

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Only 3.5 lbs. and 7.5" x 10.25" x 1.5"
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25MHz 486SX, 4MB RAM (Upgradable to 12MB)
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◈
PCMCIA Type II slot
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NiMH Battery & AC Adapter
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Preinstalled MS-DOS 6, MS-Windows™ 3.1, and TabWorks®
◈
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$1,799	**$2,099**
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An affordable notebook with the power and expandability for demanding business applications, and support for communications options. Power management features extend battery life, and security features protect data.

Contura™ Features:

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intel inside

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The Compaq 3-Year Warranty†

MAY BE ON THIS PAGE. IT, CALL FOR HELP.

Compaq ProLinea MT

MT 4/33s $1,725 *Or $62 per month**

MT 4/66 $2,299 *Or $82 per month**

Minitower case with EasyAccess™ side panel has five expansion slots and five drive bays for superior expandability. Just add options like a fax/modem, tape drive, or CD-ROM drive. Upgradable to Pentium™ technology.

ProLinea™ MT Features:

33MHz 486SX or 66MHz 486DX2 (upgradable to Pentium Technology, ZIF socket)

4MB RAM (upgradable to 64MB)

340MB Hard Drive

3.5" Diskette Drive

Local Bus Graphics with 1MB

14" SVGA Color Monitor (1024 x 768)

Preinstalled MS-DOS 6, MS-Windows 3.1, and TabWorks

Preinstalled Multimedia Solution Paq available.

Compaq ProLinea 4/33S

Enhanced performance with greater affordability. $1,475 *Or $53 per month**

Multimedia Solution Paq™

With SoundBlaster 16-sound board, internal dual-speed CD-ROM drive, external stereo speakers, microphone & multimedia software. Starts at $499.

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200MB Hard Drive

3.5" Diskette Drive

Local Bus Graphics with 1MB

14" SVGA Color Monitor (1024 x 768)

Preinstalled MS-DOS 6, MS-Windows 3.1, and TabWorks.

Preinstalled Multimedia Solution Paq available.

Compaq ProLinea Net1/25s

An ideal choice if you're looking for excellent performance at an affordable price. $1,249 *Or $45 per month**

The all-in-one styling saves desktop space and makes set-up as simple as plugging the unit in. TabWorks, a Compaq exclusive, is preinstalled for greater ease of use. Network-ready and ideal for peer-to-peer communications.

ProLinea Net1/25s Features:

25MHz 486SX (upgradable to 486DX2/66)

4MB RAM (Upgradable to20MB)

100MB Hard Drive (200MB available)

3.5" Diskette Drive

Built-in 14" SVGA Color Monitor (1024 x 768)

Integrated Ethernet controller (Token Ring available)

Energy Star Compliant

Preinstalled MS-DOS 6, choice of MS-Windows 3.1 or MS-WFW 3.11

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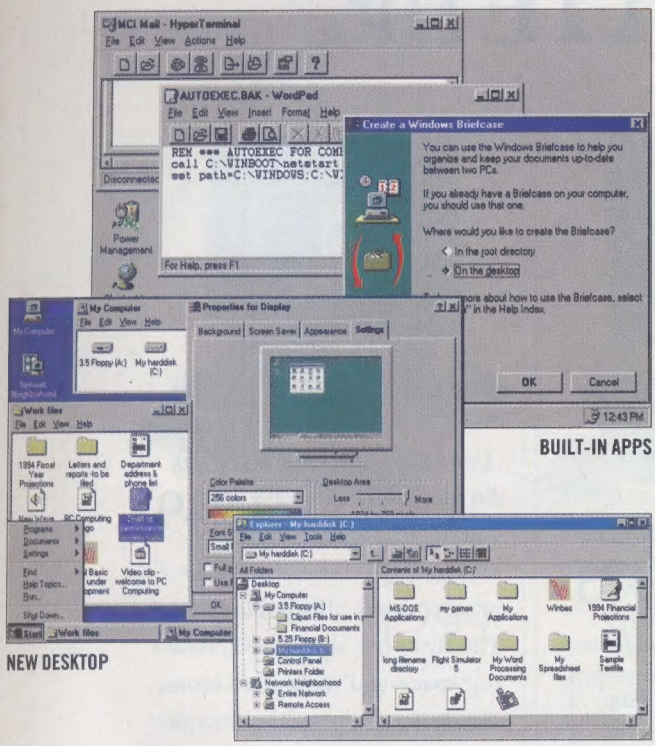
JULY 1994



BUILT-IN APPS

NEW DESKTOP

THE EXPLORER

CHICAGO WATCH

Windows 4.0

The countdown begins! Code-named Chicago, Windows 4.0 is months away from shipping, but our hands-on preview will help you start planning for a key decision you'll soon face: to upgrade or not? With Plug-and-Play peripherals, multitasking, built-in Internet tools, and no more DOS, Chicago aims to make upgrading a no-brainer. **58**

ROUNDUP

100MHz CPUs

Whether you crunch words, numbers, or graphics, these red-hot systems will help you work more productively. **118**

BRIEFING

Take Notes

Lotus's database/electronic-mail hybrid helps companies large and small trade ideas across space and time. Is it for you? **138**

ACTION ITEM

The New dBASE

Here's the very first usability testing of the new tools and new look in Borland's long-awaited dBASE for Windows. **152**

DIRECTORY

Dialing for Deals

Looking for a good buy? Our annual survey rates 60 top direct vendors on service, support, and warranty policies. **160**

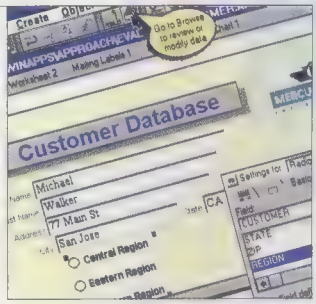
PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARK JOHANN

INTERNET: *With Mosaic, you can troll the World Wide Web. And it's free.* **113**

MORE I-WAY FREEBIES: *Get HGopher 2.3 for free on PC Contact.* **210**

LOGBOOK: *After six months on the road, here's how one notebook fared.* **115**

New!



Lotus Approach 3.0 Can a full-strength database be easy to use? Approach 3.0 makes even complicated applications a snap. **75**

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69 Video cards from ATI, Diamond, and Number Nine

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90 Asymetrix's Multimedia ToolBook 3.0

92 ConnectSoft's E-Mail Connection 2.0

94 IBM's PC DOS 6.3

96 Fractal Design's Dabbler

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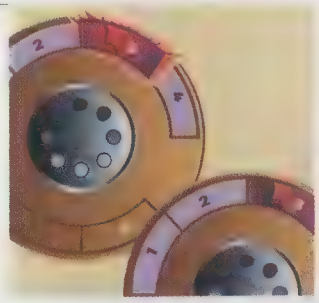
115 Logbook: AMS's TravelPro 5300 and Microsoft's Word 6.0 for Windows

Pulse Green PCs can cost more than they'll save; CD-ROM drives for notebooks; always carry enough cache; multimedia-ready desktops; Radar; and more! **30**

Help



Hard Disk Got Mauled? ScanDisk, an undocumented MS-DOS 6.2 utility, can make damaged disks whole again. **182**

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222 **How It Works:** Inside the Plug-and-Play standard.

224 **F1:** Is SCSI better than IDE? See for yourself ASAP.

228 **PC Contact:** Download this month's free files.

231 **Direct to You:** In Spec Watch, all the info that you need to buy direct.

Technolust "Make it so!" Sit back in your ergonomic chair, hands floating on its keyboard arms, and boldly go where no PC has gone before. **306**

COLUMNS

MAIL: *By phone, fax, Net, and post.* **23**

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ED BOTT: *Death to dummyware! Real users need real software. Just how far will the ease-of-use trend go?* **50**

JOHN C. DVORAK: *Thanks to greedy phone companies, many of us are still stuck on the Information Dirt Road.* **54**

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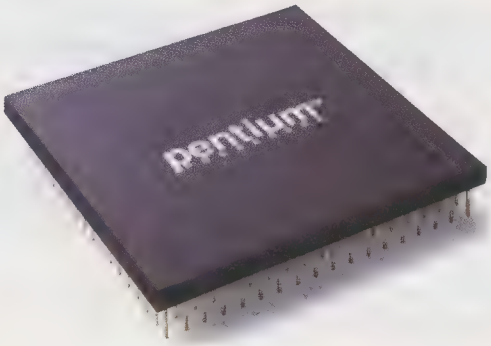
PENN JILLETTE: *Virtual reality films are a lot more diabolical when our columnist stars in one.* **312**

The course of computing is hereby changed.

From the old.



*(Actual size.)**

The chip on the left is getting a little old.

Its 15-year-old technology has been pushed to the limit. It worked well enough for yesterday's character-based computers, but it's having a hard time keeping up with the demands of today's computers and software.

The new PowerPC™ microprocessor from Motorola, however, is just getting started.

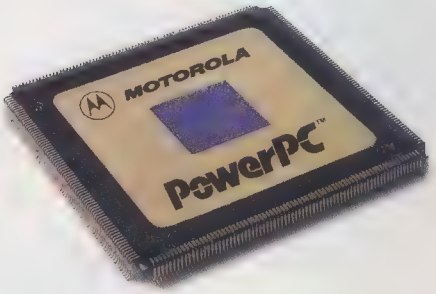
It's based on advanced RISC (reduced instruction set computing) technology, the technology most experts agree is the only way to reach the performance levels required by the new generation of computers and software.

Taking full advantage of its RISC technology, the Motorola PowerPC microprocessor runs

The PowerPC Microprocessor. *The RISC Chip.*

*Both chips shown actual size. ©1994 Motorola, Inc. The Powered by Motorola logo is a trademark and Motorola and the M are registered trademarks of Motorola, Inc. PowerPC and the PowerPC logo are trademarks of IBM Corp. and are used by

To the new.



(Smaller, cooler, faster, cheaper.)

faster, runs cooler, occupies less space and consumes less power. Surprisingly, it costs considerably less than the chip on the left.

POWERED BY MOTOROLA

The first computers based on the PowerPC microprocessor are now arriving. Apple's awesome new Power Macintosh™ computers are here. Potent PowerPC personal computers from IBM® are on the way. Computers powered by the chip on the left, it seems, are on the way out.

See the Power Macintosh at your reseller today. Or for a free copy of our PowerPC Microprocessor Update, call 1-800-845-MOTO (in Europe, 0272 447760). Either way, you'll see a change for the better.

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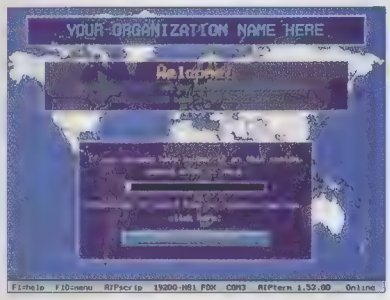

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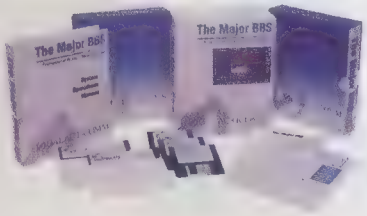

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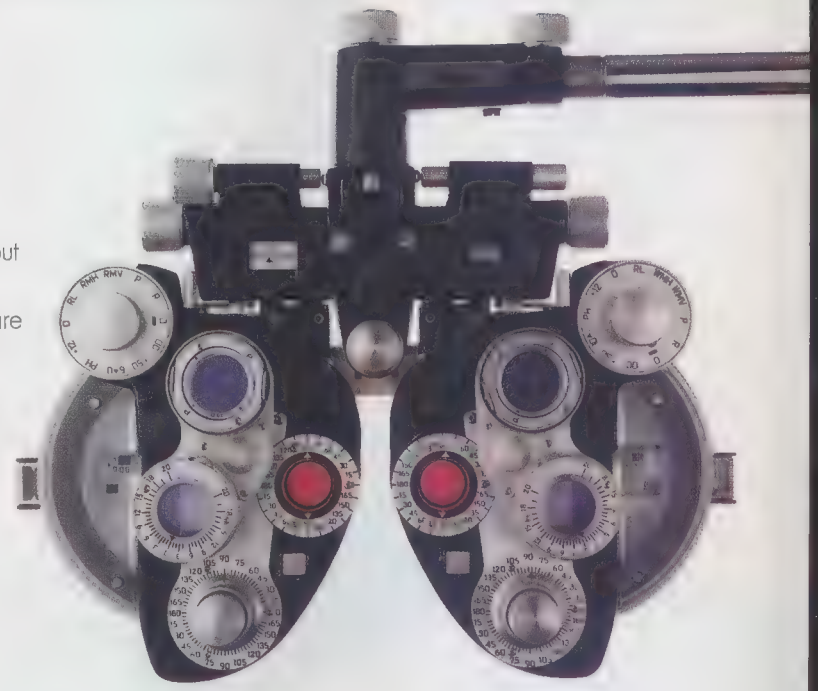

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OPERATING ENVIRONMENTS If you use DOS, Windows, or OS/2, you'll find the best advice for how to tune up your system for optimal performance. Batch files, INI editing, REXX programming—it's all there. We even have advice on how to use your DOS and Windows utilities more effectively.

APPLICATIONS We delve into word processors like WordPerfect, Microsoft Word for Windows, and Ami Pro. We gorge ourselves on 1-2-3, Excel, and Quattro Pro macros. Access, dBASE, and Paradox offer up their innermost secrets. Desktop publishing, presentation graphics, painting and drawing programs, personal information managers, e-mail, schedulers, network operating systems. . . . All told, tips for 65 applications undergo our careful scrutiny.

MAINTENANCE You know you should be cleaning up your hard drive. TMP files are stacking up by the dozen. You've got no idea what program goes with that peculiar INI file. Get with it! Our to-do lists show you how to get your PC shipshape. Now there's no reason not to reclaim that storage.

CELEBRITIES Want to master your apps? What better tip gurus than Phillippe Kahn and Bill Gates? Not to mention Brian Livingston, Jeff Prosise, Woody Leonhard, Ron White, and *PC Computing*'s own Help staff.

EASTER EGGS Tips have their lighter side, too. You know those multimedia shows that appear when you hit just the right key combination? They're called Easter Eggs, and we sent Matthew J. Lake, our master hacker, hunting for them. He found 30—to the best of our knowledge the most comprehensive collection of these entertaining programming tidbits ever assembled.

ALSO NEXT MONTH

Robert L. Hummel explains how modems translate digital signals into a form that can go over your phone lines. When he's through, you'll know enough about modems to make the best buying decision possible: whether you really V.Fast Class, what standards to demand, and what to avoid.

New! looks into the latest in video-conferencing products: Intel's ProShare and Future Labs' TalkShow. Traditional communications gets an update with ProComm for Windows.

We also kick the tires of the latest DX4 machines, check under the hood of Seiko's new color printer, and give Xircom's wireless network adapter a test spin. And, of course, Logbook reports how products are doing in the real world while Technolust catalogs the coolest products money can buy.

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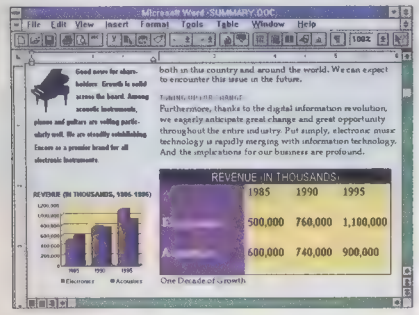

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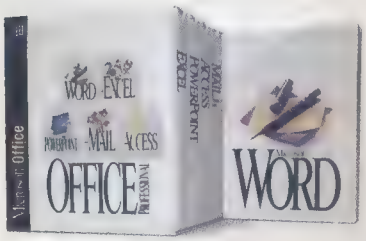

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Circle 247 on reader service card.

FOOLS RUSH IN

Believe Everything You Read

I like to consider myself fairly astute about politics and politicians; after all, I cover the Connecticut legislature for the Associated Press. But I must confess, I sure was sucked into believing John C. Dvorak's April column about drinking and driving on the Information Superhighway ("Trust Congress? Not With This Unbelievable Lair of Slop," page 88). A place like Washington, D.C., makes the craziness of his column all the more plausible, and I almost called our capitol correspondent to see if she'd look into it. Thanks for an entertaining read!

LISA MARIE PANE
COMPUSERVE 71524,127

Paper Shredder Included

I certainly enjoyed Dvorak's little April Fools' gag, which I fell for until the last line—despite all the clues. If his imaginary legislation somehow comes true, and Oliver North isn't elected this November, North would probably love to head up the modem cops—so long as he's not accountable to anyone. Hmmm. Maybe the column wasn't so funny after all.

BRADLEY BEACHAM
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

My Letter to Al

OK, guys, Dvorak had me fooled for about 24 hours. But I can't help but wonder: What did Al Gore do with my e-mail?

KAREN KELCH
COMPUSERVE, 74041,2046

Into the Unfunny Realm

I'm strongly displeased with your decision to run Dvorak's April Fools' column. The problem with his spoof is that it was too well written and altogether believable given our current legislative bodies. I've seen other spoofs in magazines, but they are usually obvious enough to be funny. Dvorak's column crossed into the unfunny realm, and I called both my senator and Senator Leahy. I'm sure our representatives in Congress have better things to do than field calls from angry constituents over this type of slop.

ROBERT BENISH
FREDERICKSBURG, VIRGINIA

IF WE ARE to be faulted for writing too well, so be it. And if it's any consolation, even some of our staff were fooled. See you next April. **RS**

Caveat Emptor Revisited

Your April article on color printers and scanned images ("Scan It, Edit It, Print It," page 134) conflicts with the Tektronix advertisement on page 193 of the same issue. The article states a print time of one to two and a half *hours* per page, while the advertisement states a rate of two pages per *minute*. What gives?

CULLEN MOORE
SUN CITY, ARIZONA

IN OUR REVIEW we tested a different technology and different Tektronix model from the one in the ad you mention. Also, our testing was based on real-world printing tests of scanned photographic images—extremely large files. Printing speeds vary depending on printer or system configuration, file format, size, source, and paper medium. **KC**

A Less-than-Colorful Review

Your article on color subnotebooks ("How Small Can Color Get?" April, page 105) was disappointing. It omitted details about the video capabilities of the machines reviewed. How many colors can they display on their built-in screens? Do all of them have an external-monitor port? If so, how many colors can be displayed on each monitor? You also failed to mention which ports are available on the Toshiba Portégé T3400CT, and you didn't mention if the MidWest Micro Elite 486SX/33 has a video port.

MICHAEL CANUEL
HOBOKEN, NEW JERSEY

ALL THE SUBNOTEBOOKS we tested provide VGA ports that support 256 colors at 640 by 480 resolution. They all come with parallel and serial ports as well. Woe to the manufacturer who would ship a machine with anything less. We will always highlight this information if such features are missing. **MJ**

Unclear on the Concept

Your review of allClear ("FlowCharter and allClear: Almost Worth a Thousand Words," May, New! page 54) was extremely naive in its lack of understanding of the problems faced by customers implementing total quality management (TQM) solutions. allClear's scripting capabilities automatically produce diagrams without having to draw a single line. The value of this approach is clear to users involved in analyzing lengthy and cumbersome corporate procedures (try to drag, drop, and connect 200 boxes). Adding new boxes to a complex diagram in the drag and drop environment is almost impossible.

allClear also easily generates diagrams automatically from a number of input

sources, such as outlines, word processing documents, databases, and spreadsheets. While it includes drawing tools, we discourage their use, especially for TQM. It is important to think about the procedure, not about how the chart should be "visualized." We do not visualize pie charts or bar charts—we trust software to produce the chart automatically from the data.

In addition, the review incorrectly stated that allClear limits the number of fonts available to the user, and your inappropriate comparisons with ABC FlowCharter mischaracterized certain facts: allClear offers a fit-in-one-page feature and includes more than 180 shapes (including all of the ISO-compliant shapes).

VADIM YASINOVSKY
PRESIDENT, CLEAR SOFTWARE

The FreeNet Alternative

I enjoyed Preston Gralla's Internet article ("Surf Cyberspace: Windows Front Ends to the Internet," April, New! page 60), but I am disappointed that he didn't mention an important alternative to commercial Internet services—FreeNets. There are currently 20 FreeNets operating in major North American cities, as well as a few in Europe.

True to their name, FreeNets have no usage fees, unlimited access time, and a range of services to rival most commercial access providers, including e-mail, Gopher, Usenet news, chat, and FTP. More importantly, FreeNets offer areas for posting regional information, and many have public-access terminals available for people without computers. Your readers will appreciate this community-based alternative.

DAVID LOAN
OTTAWA, CANADA

Wanted: Anonymous Server

Thanks for the great articles on Internet access in your April issue ("Surf Cyberspace: Windows Front Ends to the Internet" and "The Mother of All Networks," page 180). I look forward to more Internet information, especially WinSock and Serial Line Internet Protocol/Point-to-Point Protocol (SLIP/PPP). However, it's frustrating to read and salivate about your "App of the Month," then realize it's on a CompuServe server and out of my reach. If you're going to write about the Internet, use it. Set up an anonymous FTP server, and then Internet readers can benefit as well.

IKE BOTTEMA
IBOTTEMA@SCE.CARLETON.CA

MOSAIC, WINSOCK, GOPHER and many other of our featured apps are *already* available on the Internet in myriad places. Our goal was to bring Internet connectivity to readers who aren't already on the Net, but who are on CompuServe. If you are on the Internet, try an anonymous log in at ftp.ncsa.uiuc.edu. Log in as anonymous, and use your username as the password. Browse around and you should find Mosaic and WinSock, among other applications. You can then use Mosaic as a Gopher client, too. **JM**

Introducing the $139 investment no computer user can afford to be without...

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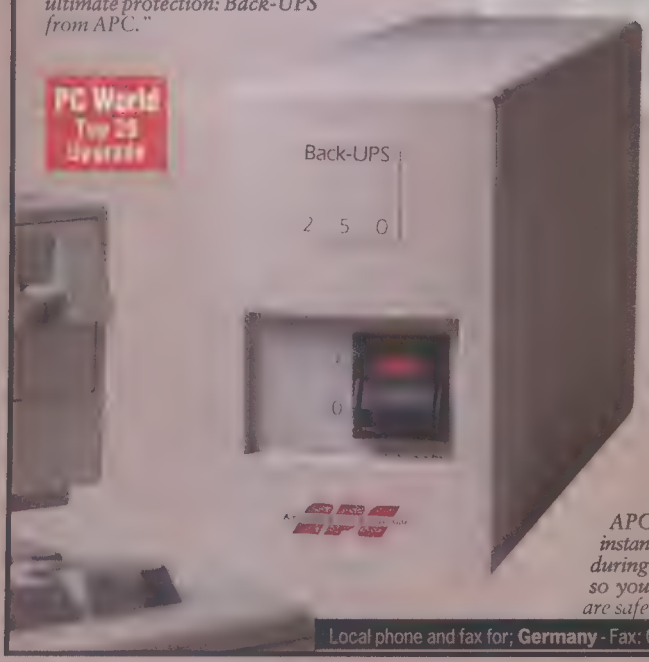

Blackouts, brownouts, sags... if you use computers, your bottom line is directly linked to your power line. The fact is, your data and hardware are vulnerable to problems that surge suppressors and power directors just aren't equipped to handle.

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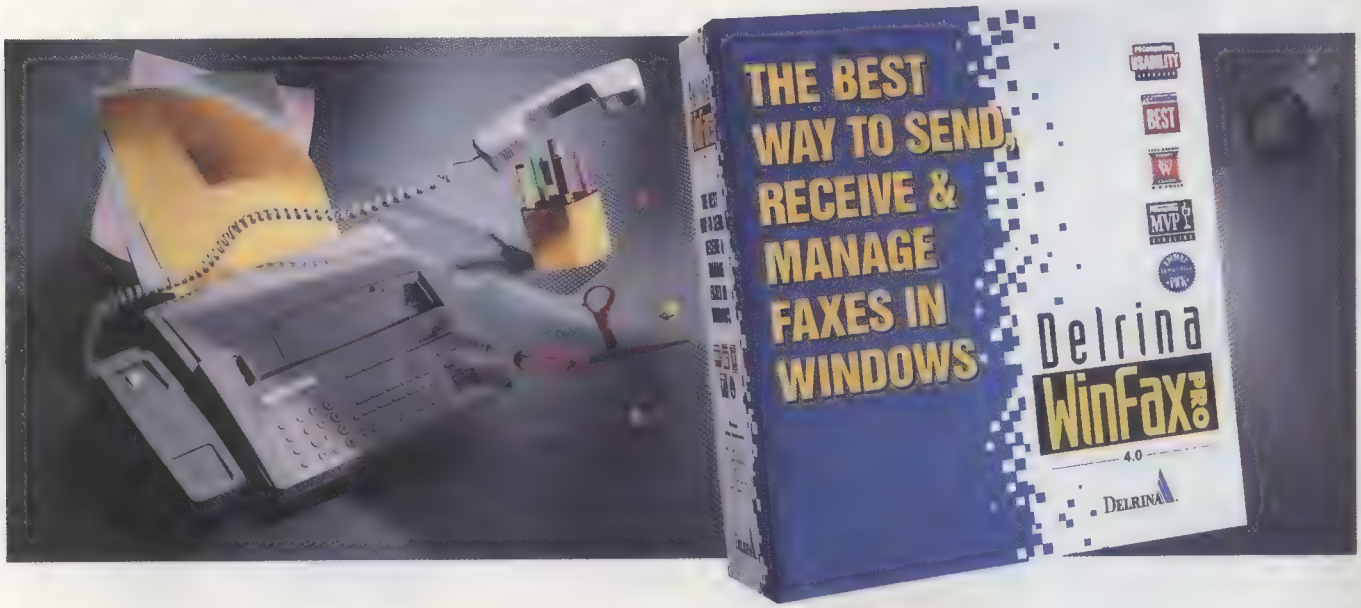
Circle 116 on reader service card.

Introducing Delrina WinFax PRO™ 4.0. You'll wonder how you ever faxed without it.



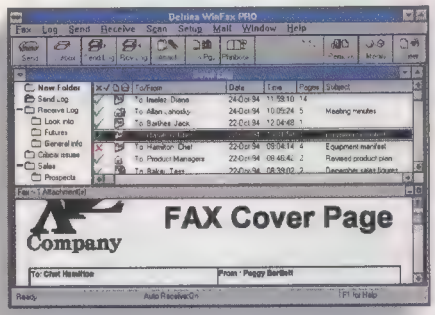
Meet the fastest, easiest, most convenient way ever to handle all your faxing – new Delrina WinFax PRO™ 4.0, the latest version of the best-selling fax software in the world. The only one that combines the advanced faxing features you need with astonishing new ease and usability.

"The best fax package there is."

That's what *PC/Computing* said about version 3.0. And now we've made it even better.

Starting with the revolutionary new streamlined interface that makes it simpler than ever to do anything you'd do with a fax machine, and a lot more. Like sending faxes directly from within any Windows application as easily as you'd print. Or organizing sent and received faxes in convenient folders. Or converting faxes into word processing documents with OCR.

There's added convenience with dozens of ready-to-use cover pages. Fax phonebooks that are drag-and-drop simple. And improved fax annotation tools that even let you add your signature.



Based on extensive usability testing, the new customizable interface includes folders for organizing sent and received faxes.

Don't try this with a fax machine.

Imagine faxing, not just an image of a document, but the actual file itself*, so it's ready to be used in an application. Imagine sending a single document that is automatically faxed to some people and e-mailed to others.

Now imagine you're on the road, and WinFax PRO automatically forwards faxes to you. Or lets you retrieve faxes sent to your regular fax number*. And there's more.

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*Requires Class 1 modem

Circle 167 on reader service card.

Don't Wait for Windows

Stealth 64 Provides Non-Stop Performance in Windows, CAD and Games.

Non-Stop Graphics

Suffering from sluggish graphics performance? Tired of seeing the hourglass appear on your screen and seemingly never go away? Then get the fastest. The Stealth 64 graphics adapter provides screaming acceleration in the most demanding Windows applications without sacrificing performance in DOS and game environments.

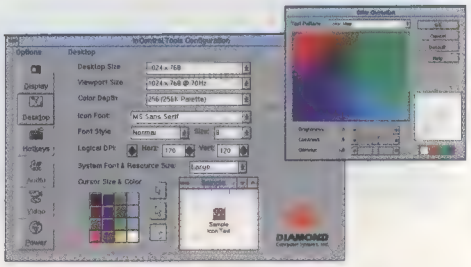
Powerful Features

- 64-bit graphics processor (S3 964)
- 43 million Winmarks in WinBench 4.0 (1024x768x256 colors on Intel P54C)
- 24-bit color at 1152x864 resolution
- Flicker-free, 120 Hz refresh rates
- 2MB VRAM and 4MB versions
- PCI and VESA bus compatible
- InControl Tools™ Windows productivity software included free

Instant Productivity

Diamond's powerful menu-driven software utility, InControl Tools, offers maximum flexibility and control under Windows.

- Virtual desktop with real-time pan and zoom
- Launch applications with a single keystroke
- Color calibration for display/printer matching
- Energy Star™ power saving features
- Pre-set and custom monitor setup for resolution, color and refresh rates



Guaranteed Excellence

Diamond's products have received more than 50 worldwide awards in the past two years. So when you purchase a Diamond graphics card, you know that you are buying award-winning excellence with a guarantee to back it.

Stealth 64 carries a five-year parts and labor warranty and phone-in technical assistance is available six days a week.

Call Now

For more on the Stealth 64 or where to buy, call our fax-on-demand service at

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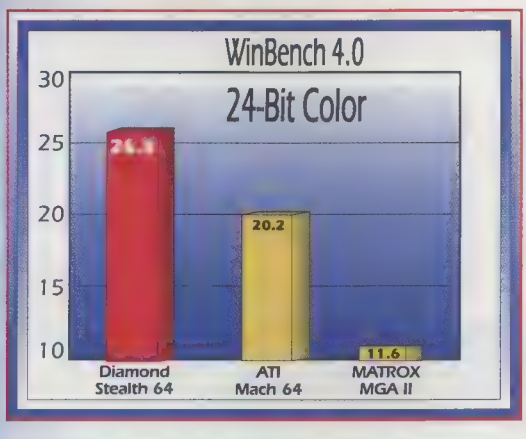
WINDOWS



GAMES & DOS

DIAMOND
Computer Systems, Inc.

Accelerating in Graphics and Multimedia

Performance tests conducted by Diamond Computer Systems, Inc. using Ziff-Davis's WinBench Version 4.0 on a Pentium 66mhz PCI system at 800x600x16M LF with 256k cache, 8MB RAM, SmartDrive 2048, and DOS 6.2. The Stealth 64 was configured with 2MB VRAM using driver release v1.03. The ATI Graphics Pro Turbo (Mach 64) was configured with 2MB VRAM using driver release v1.00. The Matrox MGA II Ultima Plus was configured with 2MB VRAM using driver release v1.32. All trade names referenced are the service mark, trademark, or registered trademarks of the respective manufacturers. Diamond reserves the right to change specifications without notice. Copyright © 1994 Diamond Computer Systems, Inc. 1130 East Arques Avenue, Sunnyvale, CA 94086, 408-736-2000, Fax: 408-730-5750. ST64 AD 110

Circle 168 on reader service card.

Mail BY PHONE, FAX, NET & POST:
Mosaic Musings • A Different Creature • Beta Fraud

One Good Node Deserves . . .

As a follow-up to Preston Gralla's Internet front-ends article in your April issue, I would appreciate a piece on what it means to be an Internet node. For example, if I were starting my own small business, how could I use Mosaic to set up an Internet node of my own? What's involved in doing this? What are the costs?

NATHANIEL HEKMAN
HEKNAT49@CALVIN.EDU

YOU ASKED FOR IT. Turn to "Untangling the World Wide Web" on page 113 of New! this month, and read Gralla's review of Mosaic, specifically the Filebox information on HTTP and HTML. **RS**

User Unfriendly

Brian Livingston did a good job describing the Internet ("The Mother of All Networks"), as long as your readers only use Windows. The Internet, however, is not a PC application, nor is it a commercial site like America Online or Prodigy that *must* create a user-friendly interface. The Net is a different creature entirely, and to expect the same level of user friendliness is absurd. If your readers can navigate DOS, they can navigate the Internet, right? Livingston, with his security concerns and comments on special software requirements, has done nothing more than instill an unfounded fear in the heart of every Internet wanna-be.

KEVIN HAMELIN
HAMELIN@FACIL.UMASS.EDU

FOR MANY OF OUR readers, the Internet is like a newly established national park, and they want to experience its beauty. What right have we to deny them well-crafted, safe trails into its depths? **JM**

Give Me a Break

April's "Coming Soon" sidebar (page 18) had me rolling my eyes, especially the opening line: "A 66MHz 486 system doesn't cut it anymore." Give me a break! I'm a small-business owner, and here's my perspective: I just paid off a 286 machine that cost $2,000 new; now, three and a half years later, it's worth less than $300. I also have a 486 running at 50MHz, which is amazingly fast. Now I read that my new machine is actually obsolete and that I should buy a Pentium machine. Personally, I'll stick with my 286 and 486 machines—I don't need software that can't run on these machines.

JEAN-PAUL TERTOCHA
WARRENSBURG, ILLINOIS

Right on Target

Ed Bott's April column, "Three Boring (But Smart) Reasons to Buy a CD-ROM," (page 20) was right on target. The Photo CD route for capturing high-quality original color graphics beats any desktop scanner I've seen, and the conversions are quite accurate.

Lots of us have 35mm camera gear and nice libraries of 35mm negatives. Now we can take our favorite negs to the shop to be put on disc, pop in the CD at home, load the editing software, and forget that we ever heard of a darkroom. It's also a treat to install a big, new program and see the files whistle by on the way to the hard drive. Two other advantages: A good sound card/CD combo gives you a SCSI controller for free, and it will play your favorite background music while you sweat over that dull spreadsheet.

DOUG SWANK
WALTHAM, MASSACHUSETTS

It's All Greek to Us

Your magazine continues to promote program revisions that verge on being fraudulent. Beta testing is a failure. Perhaps it is time for Gamma and Delta testing.

JOHN D. BALDWIN
EL PASO, TEXAS

SEND YOUR THOUGHTS TO Mail, *PC Computing*, 950 Tower Lane, 19th Floor, Foster City, CA 94404; fax us at (415) 578-7029; contact us via the Internet (76000.21@compuserve.com) or CompuServe (76000,21); or log on to PC Contact to post a public message (see page 228 for instructions). Letters must be signed and include a daytime phone number. All letters become the property of *PC Computing* and will be edited for length and clarity.

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Now you can get all your faxes whenever and wherever you travel. When someone wants to send you a fax, they simply send it to your Delrina Fax MailBox™ — using your own personal 800 fax number which we provide.

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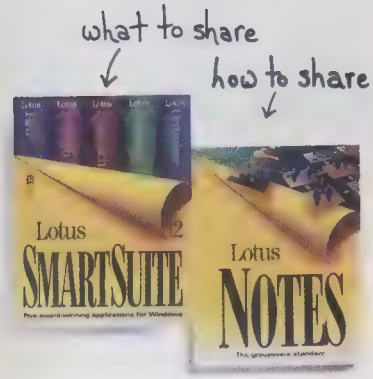
Circle 226 on reader service card.

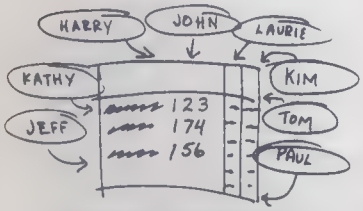
O.K., you've got your own personal vision. And this other guy, he's got his own personal vision. And so does everyone else in your workgroup.

Well, we've got these five software products that work like one and let you and your colleagues and co-workers and people you haven't ever even met do the same. Hey, find the right way to work together, there's no telling what you can do.



Even though sometimes it seems like you're in it alone, you know that you rely on the people around you and that ultimately nothing gets done without teamwork. So it makes sense that your software should help this process, not stand in the way.

That's why Lotus® SmartSuite® is designed for workgroups, not just individuals. SmartSuite is five Windows™ applications–1-2-3,® Ami Pro® word processor, Approach® database, Organizer™ personal information manager and Freelance Graphics®–fully integrated to work together, and enabled with powerful workgroup features to help co-workers do the same.



Version Manager technology lets many people work on the same document. Add Notes and they can do it at the same time.

For starters, each application shares a consistent look and feel. Everything works the way you expect it to, so if you've learned one application, you won't spend a lot of time learning the others.

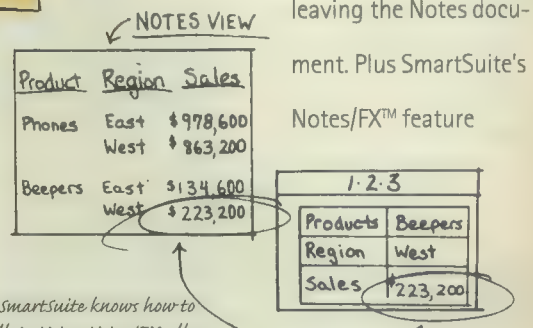
Smarter than the other suites

SmartSuite has many productivity features you just can't get anywhere else. Like Collect and Copy which lets you take multiple data ranges from any number of 1-2-3 spreadsheets and bring them into an Ami Pro document with a single click, setting up a live OLE link at the same time.

Lotus SmartSuite moves beyond integrating applications to integrating workgroups through built-in technologies like Version Manager™ which lets workgroup members work on

*$299 promotional price available while supplies last. **In Canada call 1-800-GO-LOTUS. Prices may vary. ©1994 Lotus Development Corporation, 55 Cambridge Parkway, Cambridge, MA 02142. All rights reserved. Lotus, Working Together, 1-2-3,

Now you can harness the power of SmartSuite's individual applications from within Notes, using 1-2-3's power to crunch numbers, Ami Pro's facility with words or Freelance Graphics' presentation capabilities – without leaving the Notes document. Plus SmartSuite's Notes/FX™ feature automates the exchange of information between the desktop apps and Lotus Notes. The bottom line is a better level of communication – more complete and more accurate than ever before.



SmartSuite knows how to talk to Notes. Notes/FX allows a field-level exchange between SmartSuite apps and Notes.

the same file concurrently, adding their insight without creating confusion.

Notes takes it to the next level

And to really experience the power of Working Together,® combine SmartSuite with Notes,® the groundbreaking groupware from Lotus. Right now almost 750,000 people in more than 3,000 companies are using Notes to access, track and share data in ways never before possible.

Look into SmartSuite. A SmartSuite upgrade costs **$299.*** Just call **1-800-TRADE-UP, ext. 9698.**** The time you save will be your own.

Lotus
Working Together®

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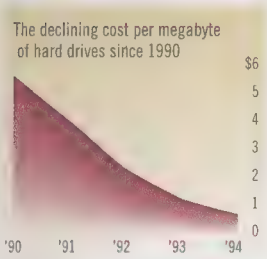
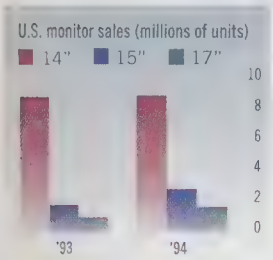
Pulse

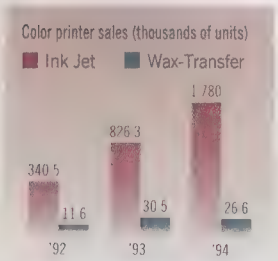
Faster Windows Video, Big Cheap Disks, New Font



More Bytes for Buck: Street prices for the most popular sizes of Winchester drives have plummeted, and there's no end to this trend in sight.



Big Picture: 14-inch monitors still dominate. But the overall market is growing, and 15- and 17-inch monitors account for most of the 1.5 million in increased unit sales.



Color of Money: In the coming years, expect wax-transfer printers to get squeezed out by ink jets at the low end and solid ink jet printers at the high end.

SAVE THE PLANET

How Green Is Your PC?

Even if you don't have a pet spotted owl, it doesn't mean you're not concerned about the environment. After all, you purchased an Energy Star PC both for peace of mind and sanctity of bottom line—the EPA says your system will save you $160 to $190 annually. But unless your green system also packs a green monitor, these estimates are about as valuable as a can of spraypaint in Singapore.

Green monitors can save you up to 110 watts when idle. Green PCs, on the other hand, crank down just 10 watts from full power to sleep. Here's a word problem for you: If your PC is on 24 hours a day, but you don't use it for 18 of those hours, and your utility charges 10 cents per kilowatt-hour (rather high), how much would you save? A mere 54 cents a month. Not even enough to buy a double latté and not nearly on par with the EPA's whopping savings claims.

Energy Savings Before Your Eyes: Monitor-maker Nanao figures a green 17-inch monitor can save you up to $79 a year.

Your best bet for saving the world and your wallet is a green monitor, and new offerings like AST Research's ASTVision SVGA draw only 75 watts or less even in full use—compared to about 120 watts for a regular monitor. Nanao USA figures you can save $66 of the $105 it would cost annually to power its $650 15-inch F340iW monitor full-time. Definitely worth it if you're about to buy a new monitor, but it will take ten or more years to recoup the purchase price in energy savings.

So, while it's hard to justify replacing your current monitor solely because the new versions are more miserly with the kilowatt-hours, the next new monitor you buy should be green. In the meantime, get a surge suppressor-cum-monitor-regulator for less than $100. We've tried several of these timeout

UPDATES Best Bets and Bargains

POSTSCRIPT . . .
Coming this month from Adobe: Adobe Type Manager 3.0, a $60 new version with network font storage, 30 typefaces, and multiple master fonts. Call Adobe Systems at (415) 961-4400.
Reader Service No. 652

. . . VS. TRUETYPE
ElseWare's $129 Font Works takes a different spin on fonts. Its low-overhead Infinifont font collection squeezes into a couple of megs of disk space. Contact ElseWare at (206) 448-9600.
Reader Service No. 653

PUSH-BUTTON COLOR
Upgrade your HP ink jet printers using HP's ColorSmart; devilish color problems like muddy printouts will be solved. Contact Hewlett-Packard at (303) 353-7650.
Reader Service No. 651

WINDOWS 3.11, NOT FOR WORKGROUPS
Update your two-year-old Windows 3.1 now. Download the eight core Windows 3.11 files from CompuServe: Type GO CIS:MSL and then download WW0981.EXE.

PHOTOGRAPH BY GIAMPIERO BENVENUTI

devices with great results. Typical is the Power Miser from Tripp-Lite (312-329-1601) which turns down your monitor after a user-selectable 5 to 60 minutes of keyboard inactivity and provides surge suppression for three additional devices.

Some Energy Star PCs have a drawback—before hooking up a green fax or voicemail server, check that it wakes up from sleep mode when there's an incoming call. The EPA's first spec calls for wake-up only from mouse and keyboard activity, not from the COM ports or modems.

Cache Check Your average 486DX doesn't gain much from a 256K memory cache—compared to a standard 128K cache. But zippy Pentiums can easily outrun today's standard 60-to-80-nanosecond memory. Don't get a machine with less than 256K of cache. You need bigger buffers with Enhanced IDE hard drives, too. Graphics-heavy and video-rich disk-to-memory transfers need at least 256K—and 512K is better.

CD-ROM on the Road No one has yet figured out how to fit a 5¼-inch CD-ROM drive into a notebook, but Toshiba, Texas Instruments, AMS, and others have taken a step toward multimedia portables by including 16-bit stereo sound chips and stereo output jacks in their portables. Add a CD-ROM player in various ways via a docking station or through a parallel port. In the case of the AMS SoundWave portable and TI's new TravelMate 4000M, there's a "slice" to attach beneath the notebook (see "Price or Pizzazz? You Can't Lose," New! page 72). More solutions are coming from peripheral makers.

Sound All Around

No matter how good your current sound board is, a new technology from SRS Labs will improve it. The digital sound retrieval system (SRS) adds depth to any sound that's hard to describe but easy to hear. The first new board incorporating SRS technology is Media Vision's Premium 3-D. There's a retrofit, too—NuReality's Vivid 3D (see Technolust, page 306).

Media Vision / (510) 770-8600 / $199 / *Reader Service No. 655*
NuReality / (800) 501-8086 / $99 / *Reader Service No. 663*

What's It Cost?

We asked several vendors to price multimedia systems with the following specs: 66MHz 486DX2, 8MB of RAM, 340MB hard drive, Sound Blaster sound card, double-speed CD-ROM drive, accelerated video, 15-inch monitor, and speakers. Here are their best prices.

Company	Best Price
MidWest Micro *(800) 572-8844*	$1,958
Quantex Microsystems *(800) 288-0566*	$1,964
Insight Direct *(800) 755-3875*	$1,999
Gateway 2000 *(800) 846-2000*	$2,055
Dell Computer *(800) 289-3355*	$2,297

Reader Service Numbers: Midwest Micro *659;* Quantex *656;* Insight Direct *657;* Gateway 2000 *658;* Dell *660*

RADAR WHAT'S NEXT, THE FIRST BANK OF INTUIT?

Noisy Notebooks Be silent no more! The newest notebooks have built-in sound and microphones.

Global Positioning System Big Brother's satellites pinpoint your location and your destination. Mapping software gets you there.

Compression MS-DOS loses DoubleSpace, loses face. 1-to-1 storage is for wimps.

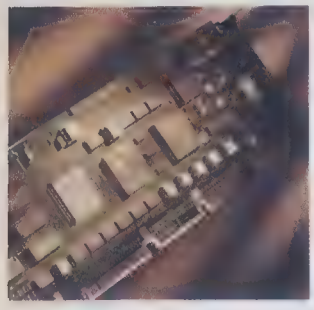
Quicken Groupies say: You'll be one of us soon.

TV-Top Computers Do you really want to run a spreadsheet from the couch?

Fly-by-Wire: Boeing's new 777 will have modem jacks on the seat phones.

CD-ROM Software Catalogs Instant gratification: Read about it, buy it online. A new way to go broke quick.

What's on the scope? If it's near or moving toward the middle, pay attention to it. If it's moving off the screen, forget about it for now. Your time is too valuable.



Real Moving Pictures—Cheap

Does Microsoft's Video for Windows 1.1 look more like a flip-book than a movie on your system? We've found a cure for your ills. Check out VideoLogic's 928Movie. This ISA or VLB board revs Windows 33 percent faster than other accelerator boards—it's one of the few we've seen that improves video playback noticeably. It eliminated annoying flickers from CD-ROM sequences that had bugged us before, and it smoothed out pixels beautifully. And if SuperMac's Cinepak video playback doesn't improve, blame VFW 1.1. For a threefold improvement in playback, download VFW11A-.EXE from CompuServe's MSL library. The half-hour download gives you Video for Windows 1.1a.

VideoLogic / (617) 494-0530 / $349 without audio; $449 with audio / *Circle Reader Service No. 661*

Contributors to Pulse: Cyndy Bates, Kyla K. Carlson, Mike Hogan, Raphael Needleman, Richard Schwerin.
Edited by Matthew J. Lake

Honey, Didya Leave the Computer On?

Not just another **pretty interface**, the new Windows shell on AST's latest Advantage PCs can field all your incoming messages whenever you roam. Leave your Energy Star Advantage turned on in sleep mode and its AST Works shell will handle **multibox** voice mail, fax, and e-mail duties for you—for only **pennies** a week in electricity. Then have it forward your faxes and voice messages to any number at regular intervals. You can designate up to 99 voice mailboxes and, in states where Caller ID is permitted, leave private messages for important customers. And service providers who charge by the hour can even time-stamp incoming and outgoing phone calls for easy tracking of billable customer expenses.

AST Research / (800) 876-4278 / *Circle Reader Service No. 636*

SOFTWARE SALESWIRE

NOVELL'S **NETWARE** HITS THE BESTSELLER LIST

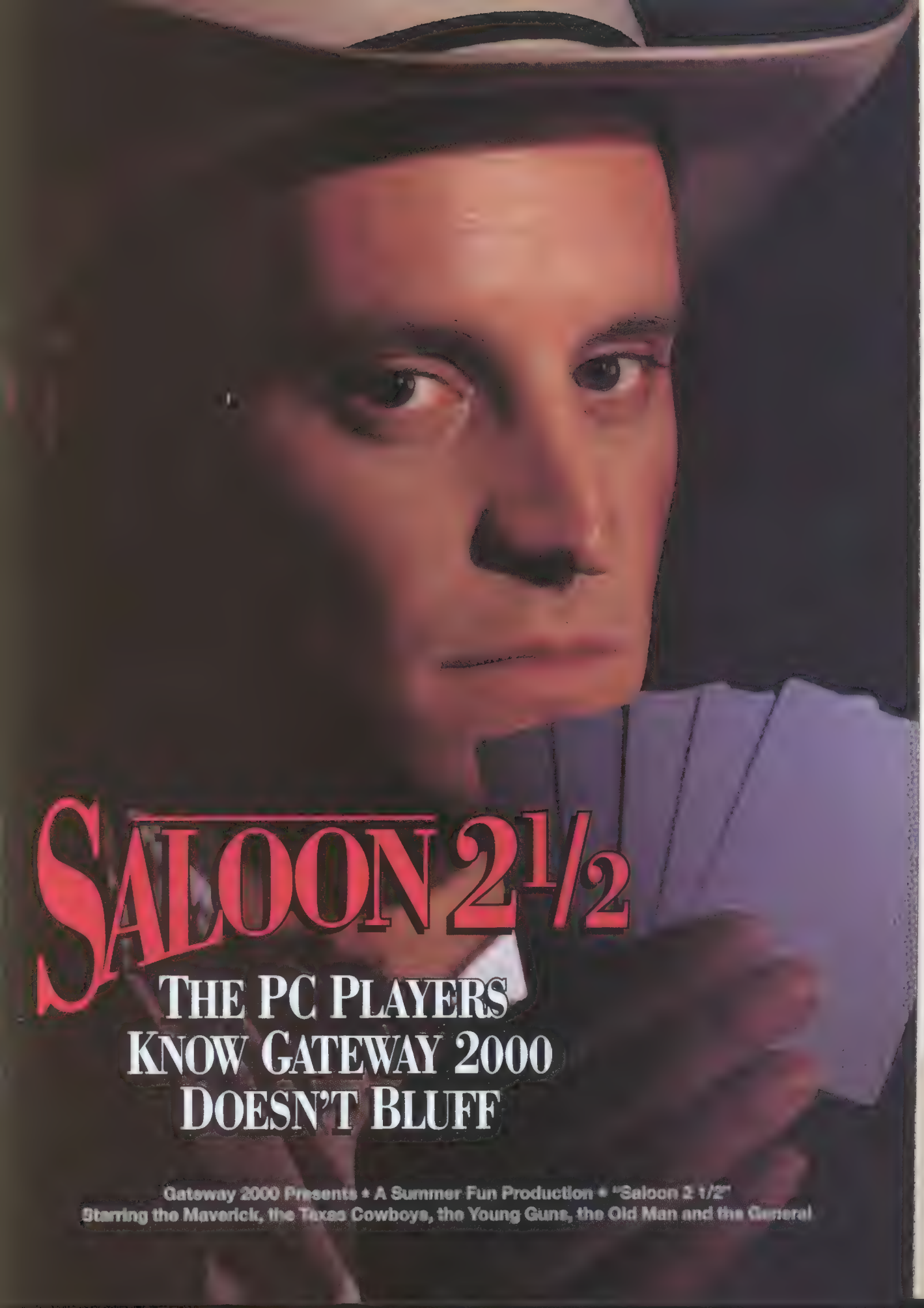
BUSINESS APPLICATIONS	Vendor	Price	Comments	MARCH	APRIL
Word 6.0 for Windows	Microsoft	$495	Customizable toolbar fits like a glove.	2	1
Office 4.*x* for Windows	Microsoft	$750	Sweetening the pot with new Access 2.0.	10	2
Excel 5.0 for Windows	Microsoft	$495	Handy subtotal feature sorts by category.	1	3
ProComm Plus 2.*x*	Datastorm	$129	Two error-correcting protocols built-in.	7	4
WordPerfect 6.0 for DOS	WordPerfect	$495	Includes flexible, automated mail merge.	13	5

UTILITIES	Vendor	Price	Comments	MARCH	APRIL
MS-DOS 6.0	Microsoft	$78	Optimize your hard disk with Defrag.	1	1
Windows 3.1	Microsoft	$80	Drag-and-drop simplicity.	2	2
QEMM 7	Quarterdeck	$99	Great memory management.	3	3
NetWare 3.*x* (5-user license)	Novell	$1,095	Features read-after-write verification.	10	4
UnInstaller 2.0 for Windows	MicroHelp	$70	Remove Windows applications at will.	7	5

PERSONAL PRODUCTIVITY	Vendor	Price	Comments	MARCH	APRIL
Quicken 7 for DOS	Intuit/ChipSoft	$69	Automatic logbook of transactions.	5	1
Quicken 3.0	Intuit/ChipSoft	$69	Feature-rich financial calendar.	2	2
TurboTax 1993	Intuit/Chipsoft	$69	New Deduction Finder foils the IRS.	1	3
Resume Writer for Windows	Expert	$15	Includes calendar/contact manager.	-	4
New Print Shop	Broderbund	$30	Proprietary file format.	-	5

Software Saleswire is compiled by G. Meier, Inc. once each month after gathering ranked-order sales information supplied by the following software industry sources. 800-Software, ABCO Distributors, American Software, Babbages, Baker & Taylor Software, CompUSA, Computability, Computer Discount Warehouse, Corporate Software, Dustin Discount Software, Egghead Discount Software, Electronics Boutique, Gate/FA, GTSI, Ingram-Micro, Josha Distributing, Kenfil, Liuski Int'l, Mensel, Multiple Zones, Navarre, PC Connection, Software Resource, Software Spectrum, Software, Etc. and Waldensoftware. They represent sales through tens of thousands of resellers and more than $6 billion of software sales. A weighting system is applied to each entry based on three factors: the entry's position in the individual chart, the power of the contributing source based on annual gross sales, and the relative strength of a source in a given category of software. All prices are suggested retail and are subject to change.

PHOTOGRAPH BY ARNOLD TIOSEJO


SALOON 2 1/2
THE PC PLAYERS
KNOW GATEWAY 2000
DOESN'T BLUFF
Gateway 2000 Presents • A Summer Fun Production • "Saloon 2 1/2"
Starring the Maverick, the Texas Cowboys, the Young Guns, the Old Man and the General

WE'RE RAISING

HANDBOOK 486
Now Standard With:
Fax/Modem
Leather Case
Extra Battery
External Floppy
COLORBOOK
Dual Scan Color
Starting at $1999
4SX-33
Intel SX-33
4MB RAM
340MB Hard Drive
2X CD-ROM
1MB Video
14" SVGA Monitor
MS Works
$1299
FAMILY PC
Intel DX2-66
8MB RAM
340MB Hard Drive
2X CD-ROM
Sound & Speakers
2400/9600 Modem
CD Software Kit
$1999
P5-60
Intel Pentium 60
8MB RAM
540MB Hard Drive
2X CD-ROM
1MB PCI Graphics
15" CrystalScan
MS Office Pro
$2499

GATEWAY 2000
P5-90 BEST BUY
Intel Pentium 90
8MB RAM
540MB Hard Drive
2X CD-ROM
2MB PCI Graphics
15" CrystalScan
MS Office Pro
$2999

THE STAKES

CD-ROM
Standard

3-Year
Warranty
Standard

Microsoft
Office Pro

AND YOU'RE THE WINNER!

Hold on to your hat, pardner. Gateway 2000® is raisin' the stakes again! Now a double-speed CD-ROM drive is standard on every Gateway desktop PC, *and* every desktop system comes with a three-year limited parts warranty — *including* Gateway monitors! It's one of the strongest warranties in the industry!

On top of that, many Gateway desktops now include Microsoft® Office Pro™ with all of Microsoft's most popular business applications: Word, Excel, PowerPoint,® Access™ and Office Manager. It's powerful software to suit powerful systems. When you bet on Gateway, you're the winner with a hand that is unbeatable in the industry.

Speaking of the PC industry, if you've been hangin' around the PC Saloon for long, you'll recognize that this Gateway ad is a sequel to one that ran way back in the summer of 1990. Taking our cue from Hollywood, we reckoned if "Saloon" was a good ad, we might as well do "Saloon 2 1/2." What was surprising about lookin' back was seeing how many things have stayed the same.

The players around the industry poker table have changed some, but the game hasn't. Gateway's strategy is to deal you a royal flush of value: high-performance, high-quality PCs at the very best prices with old-fashioned, good service. Same as always. And although Gateway has become a Fortune 500 firm, we still think like a small, maverick company from the South Dakota frontier.

Yesirree, when you have a hankerin' for a PC, just holler. We'll give you the best deal in all the land.

intel inside

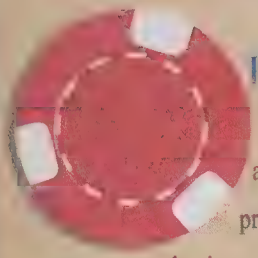
GATEWAY2000

"You've got a friend in the business."®

800-846-2062

HAS AN UNBEATABLE HAN

WHEN GATEWAY 2000 DEALS,



PENTIUMS ARE STRAIGHT ACES

Gateway 2000® Pentium-based systems are the best cards you can hold in terms of price and performance. Starting at only $2,499, they're some of the fastest PCs in the west, hands down. In a price-performance showdown with other CPUs, the 90MHz Pentium outguns them all. You just can't find more horsepower for the money.

Based on the Intel® Pentium processor, all P5 models include a PCI local bus and an enhanced PCI/IDE controller allowing your hard drive to transfer data up to twice as fast as non-enhanced systems.

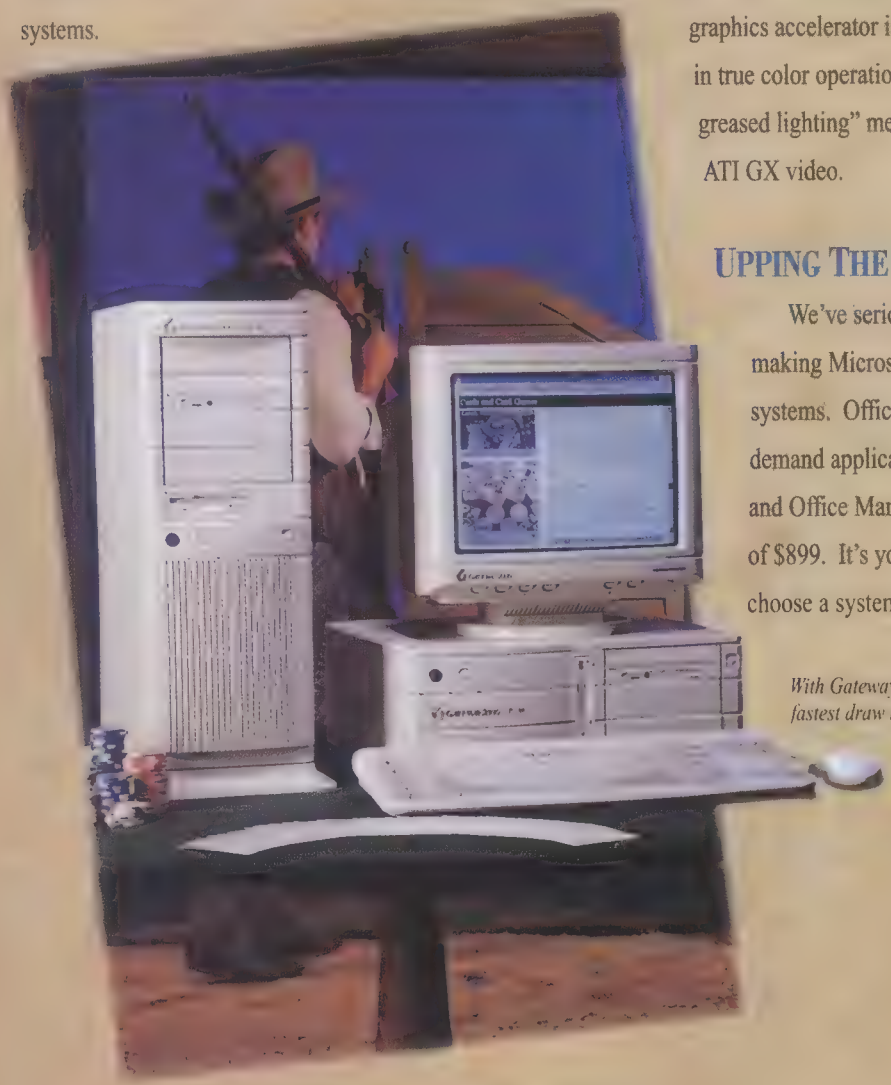
Gateway's ace of spades is the P5-90 tower model, which includes most everything a PC-poke dreams of, for $3,999. (In the 1990 "Saloon" ad, our most advanced system was a 25MHz 486 with 4MB RAM and a 150MB hard drive for $5,295!)

QUICK DRAW

New this month, the P5-90 tower has an ATI GX video card for a lightning-fast draw. The ATI GX video card uses the Mach 64 graphics accelerator — one of the first and fastest 64-bit accelerators on the market — and delivers over *100 million Winmarks* of video performance in Winbench 3.11 tests. This graphics accelerator is *twice as fast* as other 64-bit accelerators in true color operation. You'll understand what "faster than greased lighting" means when you try the P5-90 tower with ATI GX video.

UPPING THE SOFTWARE ANTE

We've seriously upped the ante in the industry by making Microsoft Office Pro standard on many of our systems. Office Pro includes Microsoft's most in-demand applications: Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access and Office Manager, all latest versions, with a retail value of $899. It's yours at no additional charge when you choose a system configuration with Office Pro standard.



With Gateway 2000's Pentium-based systems, you can be the fastest draw in the West ... or anywhere!

intel inside
pentium
PROCESSOR

YOU DRAW POWER CARDS

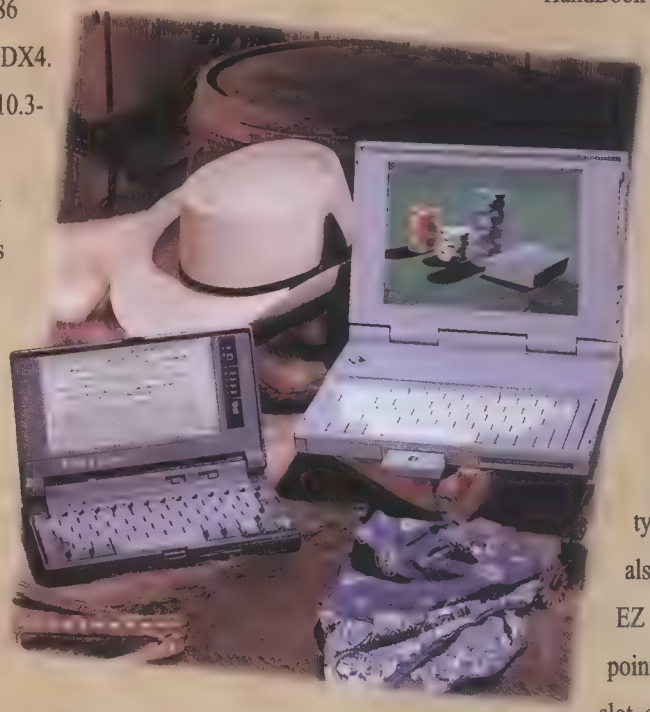
A PAIR OF PORTABLES

GATEWAY2000 COLORBOOK

If you know when to hold 'em, you'll hang onto the ColorBook™ from Gateway 2000. It's a rare card in the portable game that gives you outstanding color and desktop performance at a monochrome portable price.

The ColorBook comes in four 486 models, including the latest 75MHz DX4. Three ColorBook models include a 10.3-inch dual-scan screen, which is the biggest color portable display on the market. You won't find a screen this big, this affordable, anywhere else.

Weighing less than 5.7 pounds, the ColorBook is one of the thinnest color portables around. The ColorBook comes with a powerful Intel SL Enhanced processor — 486SX, DX2 or DX4 — and gives you 256 brilliant colors in VGA mode. You'll also appreciate its built-in trackball, large hard drive, simultaneous video support, excellent battery life, two PCMCIA Type II slots (or one Type III), and suspend/resume feature.



GATEWAY2000 HANDBOOK 486

The wild card in our hand is the HandBook® 486. While people usually don't get hooked on computers, this little beauty is so compelling that use of it may be habit-forming. And now the HandBook comes with even more features standard. You get an external diskette drive, a PCMCIA fax/modem, two batteries and a dandy leather carrying case — all included. Once you get your hands on a HandBook, you never want to put it down!

The HandBook 486 is the lightest Intel-based 486 portable available today. It weighs less than three pounds and measures roughly 10 x 6 inches. The HandBook's power and portability make it the perfect traveling companion.

HandBook models include a 25MHz 486SX and a 40MHz DX2 based on Intel's SL Enhanced energy-efficient processors. The HandBook has a bright, backlit VGA screen and a comfortable, touch-type keyboard. You'll also like the HandBook's EZ Point™ integrated pointer, PCMCIA Type II slot, and long-lasting nickel metal hydride battery. You can "hot swap" with the HandBook, too — change batteries or peripherals while the PC is running without rebooting the system or losing any data.

Deal yourself a great hand with the HandBook 486 or the ColorBook from Gateway 2000.

intel inside

GATEWAY2000

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BLAZING FAMILY VALUES

FRONTIER FAMILY PC

With a Gateway 2000® Family PC,™ you and your family can explore the frontier of the wild west, or just about any subject, from the comfort of your home.

The Family PC is a fully equipped multimedia system including a fast CD-ROM drive so you can run the best programs and games with sound, pictures, animation and video. With its high-quality sound card and speakers, the Family PC lets you play music CDs with great stereo sound. The sound card also lets you hear audio clips or record audio.

You get a fax/modem with the Family PC, too, and all the communication software you need to connect with other computer users all over the world. With your modem, you can tie into computer bulletin boards such as CompuServe,® Prodigy,® America Online® and Internet where you'll find forums and information by the gigabyte.

The Family PC also includes great software. You get four outstanding Microsoft titles, plus the Corel Photo CD which is standard on all Gateway desktop systems:

- ♥ Microsoft Works,™ Multimedia Edition — gives you a word processor, spreadsheet, database and much more!
- ♠ Microsoft Encarta 1994 Multimedia Encyclopedia — includes the complete text of the 29-volume Funk & Wagnall's New Encyclopedia, and much, much more!
- ♦ Microsoft Money™ — the complete personal financial management package.
- ♣ Microsoft Golf — terrific entertainment for the whole family!
- ♥ Corel Professional Photos CD Sampler — gives you tools to view Photo CD images.

Nobody in the industry deals you a software hand as strong as this one!

Gateway 2000's Family PC includes everything you need for multimedia and communication uses.

GATEWAY2000 FamilyPC

intel inside

STRONGER PRODUCT SUPPORT

WANTED: 3-YEAR WARRANTY

You asked for it. You got it. Now Gateway's high-quality desktop systems come with one of the strongest warranties in the industry. All Gateway 2000 desktop PCs are backed by a three-year limited warranty on parts and a one-year limited warranty on labor. The new three-year limited parts warranty *includes Gateway monitors*, an unusual provision in the industry, giving you one of the best support deals around.

Our portables still come with a standard one-year limited warranty on both parts and labor, with a special extended warranty available only at the time of purchase for an additional $100.

For details on our new warranty and all of our service and support policies, please call or write for a free written copy.

MORE STANDARD SERVICES

As a Gateway customer you also receive a 30-day money-back guarantee and toll-free technical support. On-site service is available in most U.S. locations, and may be provided without charge during the warranty if our technicians determine it is necessary.

A Gateway BBS membership also comes with every system. With the purchase of a modem, you get Triton's CoSession™ Host at no additional charge. This remote diagnostics software enables Gateway technicians to remotely work on your PC, with your permission, over the telephone.

PAYMENT OPTIONS

Gateway accepts most major credit cards and C.O.D. terms, with net 30-day terms and leasing options available to qualified commercial customers. You can also apply for the Gateway 2000 DuoLine™ MasterCard® Card, issued by Dial National Bank, Des Moines, Iowa.

ACROSS THE BORDERS

Gateway 2000 also makes it easy for friends in Canada and Puerto Rico to buy Gateway systems with toll-free telephone service to both countries. See the back pages of this ad for special 800 numbers. Plus, Canadian and Puerto Rican customers get award-winning technical support and CSA approvals. On-site service is available in some Canadian and Puerto Rican locations, and our international shipping rates are among the most competitive in the industry. Give us a call!

Printed on recycled paper with soy inks

Gateway 2000 is a corporate sponsor of GLOBAL RE-LEAF

energy EPA POLLUTION PREVENTER

GATEWAY 2000

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4SX-33*/4DX-33*

- Intel 33MHz 486SX or DX CPU
- 4MB RAM
- 340MB 13ms IDE Hard Drive
- Local Bus Graphics with 1MB
- ◆ Double-Speed CD-ROM
- 3.5" Diskette Drive
- 14" Color SVGA Monitor
- Mini Desktop Case
- 5 16-Bit ISA Slots
- 101-Key Keyboard & Mouse
- MS-DOS 6.2 & WFW 3.11
- ◆ MS Works Multimedia Edition 3.0
- ◆ 3-Year Limited Parts Warranty

4SX-33 $1299
4DX-33 $1499

4SX-33* FAMILY PC™

- Intel 33MHz 486SX CPU
- 4MB RAM
- 340MB 13ms IDE Hard Drive
- Local Bus Graphics with 1MB
- ◆ Double-Speed CD-ROM, 16-Bit Sound Card & Speakers
- 2400/9600 Data/Fax Modem
- 3.5" Diskette Drive
- 14" Color SVGA Monitor
- Mini Desktop Case
- 5 16-Bit ISA Slots
- 101-Key Keyboard & Mouse
- MS-DOS 6.2 & WFW 3.11
- ◆ MS Works, Encarta, Money,™ Golf & Corel Photo CD
- ◆ 3-Year Limited Parts Warranty

$1499

4DX2-66* FAMILY PC

- Intel 66MHz 486DX2 CPU
- 8MB RAM, 128KB Cache
- 340MB 13ms IDE Hard Drive
- Local Bus Graphics with 1MB
- ◆ Double-Speed CD-ROM, 16-Bit Sound Card & Speakers
- 2400/9600 Data/Fax Modem
- 3.5" Diskette Drive
- 14" Color SVGA Monitor
- Mini Desktop Case
- 5 16-Bit ISA Slots
- 101-Key Keyboard & Mouse
- MS-DOS 6.2 & WFW 3.11
- ◆ MS Works, Encarta, Money & Corel Photo CD
- ◆ 3-Year Limited Parts Warranty

$1999

P4D-66*

- Intel 66MHz 486DX2 CPU
- 8MB RAM, 128KB Cache
- 540MB 13ms IDE Hard Drive
- PCI Enhanced IDE Interface
- PCI Local Bus Graphics with 1MB
- ◆ Double-Speed CD-ROM
- 3.5" Diskette Drive
- 15" Color CrystalScan® Monitor
- Desktop Case
- 4 ISA, 2 PCI & 1 PCI/ISA Slots
- AnyKey® Keyboard & Mouse
- MS-DOS 6.2 & WFW 3.11
- ◆ MS Office Pro™
- ◆ 3-Year Limited Parts Warranty

$2299

P5-60

- Intel 60MHz Pentium™ CPU
- 8MB RAM, 256KB Cache
- 540MB 13ms IDE Hard Drive
- PCI Enhanced IDE Interface
- PCI Local Bus Graphics with 1MB
- ◆ Double-Speed CD-ROM
- 3.5" Diskette Drive
- 15" Color CrystalScan Monitor
- Desktop Case
- 4 ISA, 2 PCI & 1 PCI/ISA Slots
- AnyKey Keyboard & Mouse
- MS-DOS 6.2 & WFW 3.11
- ◆ MS Office Pro
- ◆ 3-Year Limited Parts Warranty

$2499

P5-66

- Intel 66MHz Pentium CPU
- 8MB RAM, 256KB Cache
- 540MB 13ms IDE Hard Drive
- PCI Enhanced IDE Interface
- PCI Local Bus Graphics with 2MB
- ◆ Double-Speed CD-ROM
- 3.5" Diskette Drive
- 15" Color CrystalScan Monitor
- Desktop Case
- 4 ISA, 2 PCI & 1 PCI/ISA Slots
- AnyKey Keyboard & Mouse
- MS-DOS 6.2 & WFW 3.11
- ◆ MS Office Pro
- ◆ 3-Year Limited Parts Warranty

$2799

P5-90 BEST BUY

- Intel 90MHz Pentium CPU
- 8MB RAM, 256KB Cache
- 540MB 13ms IDE Hard Drive
- PCI Enhanced IDE Interface
- PCI Local Bus Graphics with 2MB
- ◆ Double-Speed CD-ROM
- 3.5" Diskette Drive
- 15" Color CrystalScan Monitor
- Desktop Case
- 4 ISA, 2 PCI & 1 PCI/ISA Slots
- AnyKey Keyboard & Mouse
- MS-DOS 6.2 & WFW 3.11
- ◆ MS Office Pro
- ◆ 3-Year Limited Parts Warranty

$2999

P5-90 TOWER

- Intel 90MHz Pentium CPU
- 16MB RAM, 256KB Cache
- 540MB 13ms IDE Hard Drive
- PCI Enhanced IDE Interface
- ◆ ATI Mach 64 Graphics on PCI Local Bus with 2MB VRAM
- ◆ Double-Speed CD-ROM
- 16-Bit Sound Blaster-Compatible Sound Card & Speakers
- 3.5" Diskette Drive
- 17" Color CrystalScan 1776LE
- Tower Case
- 4 ISA, 2 PCI & 1 PCI/ISA Slots
- AnyKey Keyboard & Mouse
- MS-DOS 6.2 & WFW 3.11
- ◆ MS Office Pro
- ◆ 3-Year Limited Parts Warranty

$3999

HANDBOOK® 486

- 2.94 Lbs., 9.75" x 5.9" x 1.6"
- SL Enhanced Intel® 486 or DX2 Processor
- 4MB or 8MB RAM (expands to 20MB)
- 80 to 130MB IDE Hard Drive
- ◆ External 3.5" Diskette Drive
- 7.9" Backlit VGA Display
- ◆ 2 NiMH Batteries & AC Pack
- Suspend/Resume Feature
- 1 PCMCIA Type II Slot
- EZ Point™ Integrated Pointer
- 78-Key Keyboard
- Parallel, Serial & PS/2 Ports
- ◆ Leather Carrying Case
- MS Works for Windows™ 3.0
- MS-DOS® 6.2, WFW 3.11 & Serial Transfer Cable

◆ We're raising the stakes with better features!

HANDBOOK 486SX-25

25MHz 486SX, 4MB RAM, 80MB Hard Drive, ◆ 96/24 Fax/Modem

$1799

HANDBOOK DX2-40

40MHz DX2, 8MB RAM, 130MB Hard Drive, ◆ TelePath™ Fax/Modem

$2499

COLORBOOK™

- 5.7 Lbs., 11.7" x 8.5" x 1.77"
- SL Enhanced Intel 486, DX2 or DX4 Processor
- 4MB or 8MB RAM (expands to 8, 12 or 20MB)
- 3.5" Diskette Drive and Removable 120 to 340MB IDE Drive
- 10.3" or 9.4" VGA Dual-Scan STN Color Display
- NiMH Battery & AC Pack
- Suspend/Resume Feature
- 2 PCMCIA Type II Slots (1 Type III)
- Integrated Trackball (2 buttons)
- 85-Key Keyboard
- Parallel, Serial, PS/2® & VGA Ports
- MS Works for Windows 3.0
- MS-DOS 6.2 & WFW 3.11

COLORBOOK DX2-40

40MHz DX2, 4MB RAM, 250MB Hard Drive, 10.3" LCD

$2499

COLORBOOK DX2-50

50MHz DX2, 8MB RAM, 250MB Hard Drive, 10.3" LCD

$2999

COLORBOOK DX4-75

75MHz DX4, 8MB RAM, 340MB Hard Drive, 10.3" LCD, MS Office Pro, TelePath Fax/Modem, Case

$3799

Toll free from Canada 800-846-3609

Toll free from Puerto Rico 800-846-3613

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*Intel Verified: for the Pentium™ OverDrive™ Processor

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Hours: 7am-10pm Weekdays, 9am-4pm Saturdays(CDT)

GREAT DEALS ON EXTRAS!

You're sure to get a great deal on all kinds of peripherals and software, sold only with the purchase of a system.

MULTIMEDIA

Basic Audio Multimedia Kit

Here's everything you need to add multimedia to a Gateway PC.

- Gateway 2000 16-bit CD-quality sound card, compatible with Sound Blaster™ cards, with MIDI/game port, mic in, stereo line in/out
- 2 Labtec® CS-180 speakers
- Corel Professional Photos CD Sampler

$109 *(with system purchase)*

Wavetable Audio Multimedia Kit

Once you've heard wavetable audio, basic audio will never do!

- Ensoniq Soundscape 16-bit wavetable sound card, MT-32 and FM mode, General MIDI, Sound Blaster and AdLib compatible
- New Altec Lansing ACS-31 three-piece speaker system
- MidiSoft Sound Explorer and Time Warner's Aegis software
- Corel Professional Photos CD Sampler

$279 *(with system purchase)*

Altec Lansing ACS-31 Speakers

A Gateway exclusive from Altec Lansing: a three-piece speaker set at a two-piece price. Two 3-inch free-standing speakers crank out up to five watts per channel while the subwoofer can deliver 15 watts of heart-pounding bass. For the price, you won't find anything better! **$119**

Multimedia Software Starter Pack

Great complement to any multimedia system. You get nearly $700 worth of software for only $139! Package includes Mad Dog McCree, Tuneland, Mayo Clinic Family Health Book, Better Homes and Gardens Cookbook, Sitting on the Farm, Sam & Max Hit the Road, Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing, Chess Master 3000, U.S. Atlas and World Atlas. You also get a compact disk cleaner and 20-disk storage rack. **$139**

COMMUNICATIONS & STORAGE

TelePath™ II Fax/Modem

Internal fax/modem, 14,400bps modem, V.32bis, with 14,400bps fax capability. Includes CommWorks™ data and fax communication software, CoSession™ Host remote diagnostics, plus a CompuServe® trial membership. **$129**

Colorado Memory Systems® TBU

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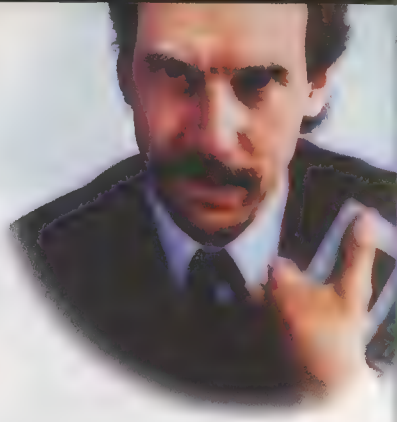
Paul Somerson



Voice Vote

Thud. Or maybe splat. Apple's Newton has hit the ground, and not exactly running. Its model 110 upgrade sports a flip-up plastic cover, which comes in handy to shield it from dust on dealers' shelves. But wait—aren't we now in some gooey-eyed Age of Convergence? Shouldn't Apple's pioneering little PDA be in everyone's pocket? Did it really stumble because its handwriting recognition turned out to be just so much frail **MOONBEAM** technology? No way. Saying Newton had just a few problems is like saying Clinton has just a few character flaws.

It (Newton, that is) tried to be all things to all people. It was slow, overpriced, and oversized. Its screen was dim and unreadable. It needed wires to communicate with the outside world, and OK, the handwriting recognition thing doomed it, but only after *Doonesbury* turned this interesting but **UNDERCOOKED** technology into a national laughingstock.

The real reason Newton fizzled is that—despite all of the **CHIRPY PROMISES** in its early ads—the best interface company out there forgot that real people just don't find it natural to communicate by writing with plastic pens on glass.

Until the interface improves, PDAs won't catch on as computers that will someday let wireless phones plug in. Right now they have a much better shot the **OTHER WAY AROUND.** Like BellSouth's Simon, designed by IBM. It's a cellular phone with built-in send/receive wireless fax and e-mail, and a modest computer stuffed inside. A small window pops up a tiny "predictive keyboard" that's smart enough to know which few letters an onboard spelling dictionary thinks you're likely to type next.

However, Simon's a bit bulky. And tapping in commands even on its slick minikeyboard just isn't natural enough. All these handhelds **CRY OUT FOR** voice recognition. It's coming. And IBM's been doing a lot of the heavy lifting here. Its discrete speech recognition system can handle 20,000 words, but . . . nobody . . . talks . . . one . . . word . . . at . . . a . . . time (unless they're heavily sedated or starring in a Sylvester Stallone movie). Its continuous speech recognition software can handle about a thousand words, which isn't bad.

Or get this: Zexel USA has plopped a satellite-based navigation gizmo (using Rockwell's Navstar Global Positioning System) into the dashboard of an **OLDSMOBILE 88.** Using a synthesized male voice, this gadget guides you flawlessly to your destination. Sounds great—until you get to the part that says the user simply punches in the destination on a small keypad.

Sure, drivers are supposed to enter such info before they start. But considering that they commonly eat, drink, smoke, phone, shave, and apply makeup while streaking down the highway, **IMAGINE THE MAYHEM** that will result when these hunt-and-peckers look down and start tapping away at 70 mph. Again, a decent voice recognition system is the clear answer.

For the industry to win big here, we need the kind of Enterprise computing that Captain Kirk relied on to communicate and calculate. Until video takes off, when it comes to truly natural interfaces, voice gets my vote. Watch for a special upcoming *PC Computing* technology report on this topic.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JAMES McGOON

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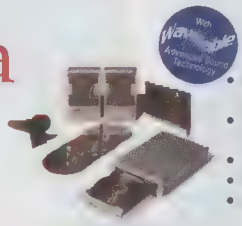

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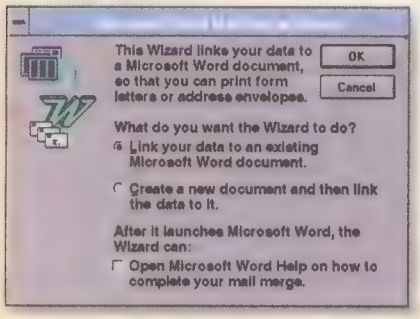
They say you can't be all things to all people. But one database comes really close: new Microsoft Access® database management system 2.0. The first relational database for everyone.



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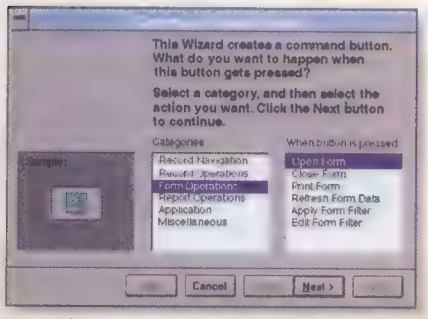

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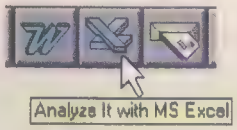

With OfficeLinks, send data directly to Microsoft Excel using the Analyze It toolbar button.

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Ed Bott

Dummy's Curse

I am not a dummy. The fact that you're reading this magazine means you probably aren't, either. But increasingly, we're being surrounded by technological know-nothings. One of last year's best-selling computer books was Dan Gookin's *DOS for Dummies*, a brilliant piece of writing and a sad commentary on how difficult it is to use PCs, DOS, Windows, and just about any application you can name.

Faster than you can say *Rocky V* or *Police Academy VI*, the supersuccessful *DOS for Dummies* has unleashed a flood of me-too how-to books. They're mindless, yes, but these cheap knock-offs are mostly harmless.

Unfortunately, another series of stupid sequels isn't so benign. A new generation of Windows software, filled with dummy-inspired features, is threatening to drag us non-dummies headfirst into techno never-never land. Some represent the bright side of usability testing, with interface innovations that are good for experts and novices alike. But others are graceless, productivity-sapping, user-hostile kludges guaranteed to offend anyone with an IQ that's higher than room temperature.

How do you spot dummy software? Here are some telltale signs:

Meaningless Manuals Dummies never RTFM, so some software developers have begun converting documentation to dummies-style comic books. These move at a glacial pace, one shuffling step at a time, through every obvious feature. If you want the technical reference manual—you know, the one that has the answers to the really hard questions—have your credit card ready, because these days it costs extra.

Witless Wizards These step-by-step helpers were a good idea when they first appeared, and they still make sense for complicated features you don't use every day. But beware of developers that populate their programs with breathless text and dopey drawings, especially the anthropomorphic variety that look like they just crawled out of *The Smurfs in Silicon Valley*. We non-dummies prefer our wizards dressed in business suits.

Helpless Icons An advanced Unclear on the Concept Award goes to a recent dummies book that includes explanations of all the icons and buttons used in popular Windows programs. Wait a minute! Aren't icons supposed to be intuitive shortcuts? Software developers can take their pick of icon help systems, but if they expect us non-dummies to buy, they'd better pick one. If they really want to earn our undying respect, they can make it easy to eliminate the icon bar, too.

Dummy Defaults The new conventional wisdom says that if you offer a dummy a choice, he or she will pick the wrong option every time. The answer, unfortunately, is to eliminate choices. That explains why hard-coded directories are making an unwelcome comeback in installation routines and why some programs insist on replacing crucial files in your Windows and System directories without asking.

'Yes, I'm sure, dammit!' You know the drill. A dialog box asks whether you're sure you want to delete a file. Yes, you're sure. Then another dialog box asks if you're really, really sure. Yes, you're really, really sure. Any day now, you can expect to see a dummy-inspired File Manager replacement that demands you sign a release—and promise not to call tech support—before it will delete a file.

Expect to see a **DUMMY-INSPIRED** *File Manager replacement that insists you sign a* **LEGAL RELEASE** *and promise not to call* **TECH SUPPORT** *before it will delete a file.*

Killer Serials Even the densest of dummies won't buy copy-protected software these days. So software developers have devised a subtler form of torture: Print a serial number on a floppy disk, then at some point during the installation process ask you to type that number into a dialog box. Invariably, of course, the serial number is on the disk that's in the drive at the time. This technique can't possibly deter any but the most feeble-minded software pirates, but it instantly lowers my expectations.

Licenses in Legalese Dummies never read license agreements, but you and I do. So software companies that expect us to take these agreements seriously had better write them in plain English. We should demand $10 off the retail price for each weasel word like *hereinafter, whereto,* or *aforementioned* that appears in a license agreement—assuming you can find the agreement, that is. After I slit the shrink-wrap on one multimedia program last year, I decided not to install it. Why? Because bold letters on the outside of the media envelope warned me not to open it unless I agreed to the terms of the license agreement. Trouble was, the dummy developers had placed the license agreement *inside* the envelope!

Maybe dummy software is the inevitable result now that $999 PCs and $49 applications are sitting on kitchen tables throughout North America. Usability should be one of the design goals for any PC product. But it's not OK to make a product more usable by simply slicing away annoyingly complex features and eliminating choices. Those of us who use computers for business have a right to expect more.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JAMES McGOON

PC Magazine, PC/Computing, PC World, Computer Shopper & Windows Sources All Agree...

The ZEOS® Pantera™ Is The #1 Pentium PC.

We could fill this page with self-indulgent comments about how technically superior our Pentium processor-based systems are, how they perform far better than the competition, how great a value they are–and so much more. But why listen to us, the manufacturer, when top editorial experts at three leading publications said the same thing–and far more eloquently.

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PC World, Best Buy, June 1994

"In terms of performance, the Pantera-66 left little to be desired ...this machine scored high consistently and laid claim to no low scores whatsoever."
PC Magazine, Editors' Choice, April 12, 1994

VALUE:

"ZEOS Pantera-66 combines quality features, good price, and high performance..."
PC Magazine, Editors' Choice

"A standout in speed and value...we suggest you spend your money on this machine–it offers the best value of any system we tested...this is a deal you simply can't pass up."
PC/Computing, BEST

THE EXPERTS CONCLUDE:

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Windows Sources, Experts' Pick, June 1994

"...the fastest system we've ever tested ...number one power desktop Best Buy."
PC World, Best Buy

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PC/Computing, BEST, May 1994

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Computer Shopper, Top Choice, April 1994

"...there's no doubt which machine you should choose: ZEOS's Pantera-66."
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OK, so maybe we were a little indulgent, but that's what the experts said–and they all agree that the ZEOS Pantera is the top choice. Make it your choice. Call a ZEOS Systems Consultant today.

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- *PC/Computing* BEST (May 1994)
- *PC World* Best Buy (June 1994)
- *Windows Sources* Experts' Pick (June 1994).

These prestigious awards all add up to one thing–ZEOS computers are your #1 choice.

Don't settle for less. The ZEOS Pantera has it all. *PC/Computing* concurs: "Hot performance, room for expandability, and a low price make this system our top choice."

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"At the top is the new ZEOS Pantera-66, a Pentium-66 that recorded the fastest benchmark results ever to come out of the PC World Test Center," reported *PC World.*

PC Magazine said: "ZEOS Pantera-66 combines quality features, good price, and high performance.... A consistently above-average performer on all our benchmark tests...."

The ZEOS Pantera received the highest marks on many benchmark tests including the Graphics WinMark and Disk WinMark tests run by *PC Magazine.* Its Disk WinMark surpassed the next closest competitor by 35 percent!

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yes It runs with NetWare

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SERVICE & RELIABILITY PC READERS' CHOICE

ZEOS offers you all this and more. It's easy to see why the Pantera is the "number one power desktop Best Buy." It's the Editors' Choice. Make it your choice. As *PC/Computing* said, "there's no doubt which machine you should choose: ZEOS's Pantera...this is a deal you simply can't pass up." Call your ZEOS Systems Consultant now at 800-554-5218.

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- Three PCI slots and five ISA slots.
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Circle 248 on reader service card.

John C. Dvorak

Digital Dander

It made my blood boil as I listened to a press briefing given by Northern Telecom regarding their high-end ATM "switch" that is being used in various tests and businesses around the world. This piece of equipment was designed to be used in phone systems to allow a new technology called ATM (asynchronous transfer method) to be employed for high-speed digital communications between your phone and mine. In a pig's eye! By the time they get around to universal implementation, something new and better will come along. They'll stop ATM and start on something new. So nothing gets done except here and there in various test markets.

This and other announcements get my dander up because the phone providers I use—namely U S West (I like to call them U S Worst) and Pacific Bell—cannot supply my house with an ISDN (integrated services digital network) connection. And U S West cannot locally provide the crude Switched 56 connection that should be a no-brainer.

So I'm watching this Northern Telecom guy talk about how Cleveland will connect to Los Angeles using ATM. What about San Francisco? What about the thousands of little cities around the country? When the phone companies were strictly regulated they were required to service remote areas. Now it seems they're not interested. There's not much profit in running a digital-ready line to Dungeness, Washington, for example. There are no financial institutions doing worldwide money trading there. In Cleveland you have the computer-intensive Progressive Corporation doing risk analysis for the nation's insurance carriers. To make their life easier, they'll get digital service. To hell with the crab-pot guy and all the families in Dungeness.

The little towns cannot be left out of the digital revolution just because the phone companies want to goof around with game delivery and set-top boxes for suburban Omaha. Yes, while U S West ignores its responsibilities to establish high-quality phone links to its area of responsibility, it's going to test market in Omaha a set-top box to be jointly developed with 3DO. U S West is not alone. Pacific Bell and the rest of these communications providers (they used to be called phone companies) are ignoring their primary responsibilities so they can goof around with multimedia, CD-ROMs, set-top boxes, cable TV, and all sorts of businesses that are hardly a benefit to the nation or to the states they serve. It's time they be reregulated.

I'm not complaining because I personally cannot get an ISDN channel after ten years of waiting. I suppose I can live with 28.8 Kbps for data transmission. I'll just never be able to do live video from desktop to desktop like they do in Santa Clara and nearby locations where the phone company perceives rich folk to be living. But when I discovered that Nynex can't get an ISDN line into *PC Magazine,* located at One Park Avenue in the dead center of New York City, then I began to wonder what the heck is going on. This is nothing less than a national security issue. Heck, you can get ISDN in most parts of newly developed Asia!

We need ISDN **TODAY** *. . . . The situation is becoming a* **CRISIS** *when you can* **GET ISDN** *in most parts of newly developed* **ASIA** *but not in many locales here in the* **U.S.**

ISDN is here today, but not available in most locations "because something better is coming along." At least that's the excuse Pacific Bell gave me, that the faddish ATM network won't be fully in place (if ever) until 2010. What kind of competitive advantage will we have as a nation if we have to wait 15 years to make the phone system digital?

Like never before, the requirements of a global economy—the need for increased telecommuting and the demand for interpersonal digital connectivity and other services—require universal ISDN service in the United States and Canada (oh, never mind Canada; ISDN is readily available there). We will never see this happen unless the U.S. government steps in. The deregulation experiments of the Reagan-Bush era are over. Why a Democratic Congress and a Democratic president cannot see that many of these experiments failed is beyond me.

If left unchecked, the Baby Bells may go off and make PC clones or start a franchise of computer stores. Already Pacific Bell has decided to retail LAN hardware—it has an entire retail operation in place. It's time to put a stop to this. The phone companies must be reincorporated into a regulated monopoly or be left with their new businesses and a new regulated monopoly be established. Since they still have all the expertise, the former solution is the only real solution. The government must look at the use of profits and the non-telecommunications–related spending of the phone companies.

I personally believe that this situation is a crisis. We all must complain to Congress loudly and for as long as it takes to get these guys back on track. I'm sick of hearing about an Information Superhighway when most of us are still senselessly stuck somewhere out on an information dirt road.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JAMES McGOON

If you've ever owned a copy of Norton Utilities®, you know you don't need a super-hero's cape to have magic-like powers.

Famous for its daring rescues and recoveries, Norton Utilities is one of the most honored software programs in the history of personal computing. And now there's new Norton Utilities 8.0.

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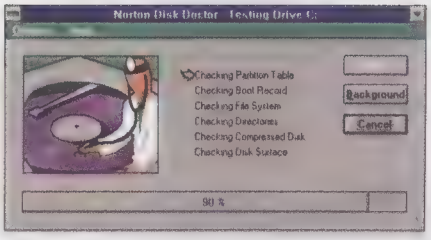
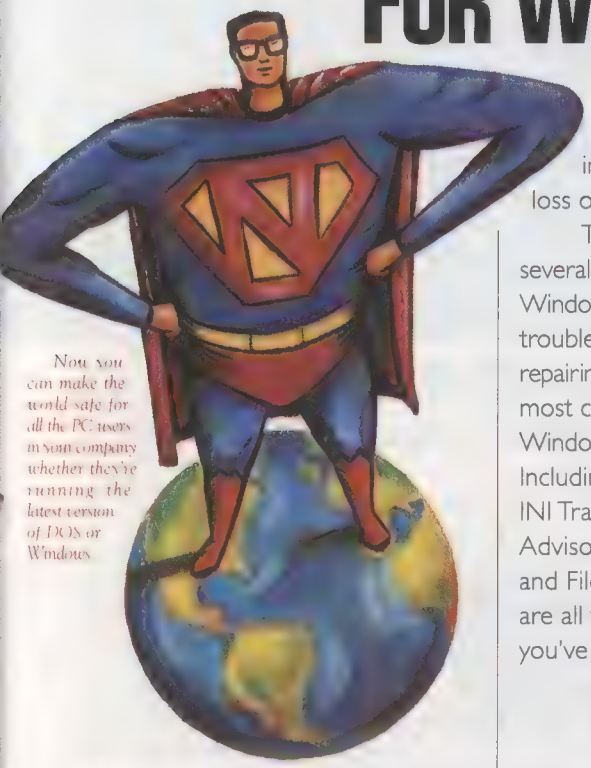


Our new System Watch monitors virtually everything going on within your Windows environment. What's more, it provides real-time crash protection by alerting you to any potentially dangerous situations that could result in system failure and the loss of your data.

There are still several other new Windows utilities for trouble-shooting and repairing even the most challenging of Windows problems. Including INI Tuner, INI Tracker, INI Advisor, INI Editor and File Compare. And there are all the classic DOS utilities you've come to rely upon.

The pioneer of data protection and recovery brings you the new improved Norton Utilities 8.0

After Years Of Saving DOS Users, Now You Can Make The World Safe For Windows, Too.



Now you can make the world safe for all the PC users in your company whether they're running the latest version of DOS or Windows.

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Both Speed Disk™ and Disk Doctor® now operate in the background. Providing continuous disk optimization and file system analysis and repair.

You'll find support for the widest range of compression formats under both DOS and Windows. In addition, there's a complete diagnostic tool set for analyzing all of your computer's hardware components from drives to video.

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Both our new Norton Utilities Administrator and our Norton Utilities 8.0 come with a full 60-day, money-back guarantee.

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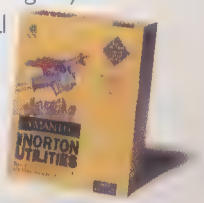
Start Your Day With Norton Utilities 8.0.

For maximum protection, you should always boot your PC with Norton Utilities 8.0 at the very beginning of your working day. So zap over to your local computer retailer or software store now. And make the world a safer place for everyone.



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Circle 122 on reader service card.

Gil Schwartz

Power Up—Not!

I'm writing as fast as I can because I'm working on my laptop and I don't want to run out of juice, the way I usually do just about the time when I'm honing in on an important idea and then here comes the message that I'm running on reserve power and that I'd better put myself to sleep, or plug myself in, or turn off my backlighting, or something else inconvenient, especially like now, while I'm on a plane.

That's the thing about batteries. They're like business friendships. They start off all bright and brisk and full of promise, but before you know it they drain off, no matter how carefully you try to make them last, and poof! When you need them most, you're high and dry without a paddle.

Wow. Down ten minutes from just two actual minutes of use. I'd better turn off my screen backlighting. That's better. Except . . . I can't really . . . see very well now. I have to kind of tilt the screen a little bit . . . this way . . . there! That's fine. I can almost see the blinking of the cursor now and imagine the words I've already written. Kind of like taking notes on a dream you had in the middle of the night, scratching out a message to yourself that will make no sense when the light of morning comes. But that's all right. If I have to choose between frizzing out in the middle of a job or stumbling around in the dark, it's a no-brainer.

I'm not saying things aren't better than they used to be. Yeah, I remember my first laptop, an old NEC that ran admirably on a clunky, enormous battery unit that coughed up sputum and gave out in just a little over an hour. Nowadays, the battery in my sturdy 6.8-pound Versa is thin, lean, and efficient, delivering about two full hours of power, unless, of course, I'm working in a graphics-intensive application . . . or unless it was overcharged in the first place, or undercharged, maybe, or the moon is in the seventh house and Jupiter is aligned with Mars, in which case I get a lot closer to . . . well, about an hour and 15 minutes. Maybe 16.

Oh no. Here I am with only 55 minutes of power left and I've just been sitting here looking out the window while my precious bodily essence is seeping, flowing, oozing away! It's a terrible feeling.

Like the time I was getting on a flight in Miami, where the security checks are particularly egregious, and I say to the guy who looks like a terrorist but is actually a guard, "This is a computer." And he says, "Turn it on." And I say, "Sure. No problem." Except there is a problem. My battery, like the aged family pet in a Disney film, has died in its sleep. It's no longer a computer at all, in any real sense. It's . . . a doorstop. I have to check it as luggage. Luggage! I'm still talking to my CPU about that horrendous indignity.

Or the time I was sitting on my couch, having finally pushed the rock of procrastination on the chairman's quarterly memo up the steep incline of my laziness and positioned myself to roll it down the other side. And I have produced not one, not two, but two and one-eighth pages of Total Quality. "Given the stiff requirements we have set for ourselves in this regard, it is virtually miraculous that we have exceeded them by producing the following numbers," I wrote. Inspired? Perhaps not. But present on the page? No question. Seized with ambition for excellence, I then laid in a very nice table incorporating all sales, margin, operating profits, and investment information. I was just selecting a 10 percent gray fill for highlighting the reduction–in–head-count line when *bzzt.* Darkness was on the face of the waters, and nearly two hours of musing, perusing, and, finally, raw labor was in vain.

One minute you're there and the next? . . . PFFT. You're gone . . . Seeping, flowing, OOZING away . . . Like the AGED PET in a Disney movie . . . COUGH cough. Oh no. Not now.

But what's the point of complaining? Those are the rules of the game as we play it now. Battery life is short, and then you die. That's all there is to it. Oh sure, we can live carefully, watching our power like busy little worker ants who waste not, neither do they want. Or we can go for the gusto, pedal to the metal, risking a premature cutoff when we still have so much to say and do and be. Either way, though, that moment of truth comes too soon to us all. And after that moment . . . nothingness. That's nature, I guess. You can't fight it.

But, my friends and neighbors, what of the digital, wireless, modular infotainment highway of the metafuture? Huh? Will it be dolloped out to us in two-hour doses? How can we get there from here with our pathetic power cords plugged into the nearest outlets? There are so many opportunities awaiting us as a civilization, and if we can uncouple ourselves from the mother baseboard and. . . .

Oh no. Not now. I'm too young to die.

Wait. Please. *Cough cough.* I'm growing dim. I'm losing altitude. I'm . . . gone. And with so much to tell you, too. Isn't there anything I can do about that?

I know!

Hi, guys! Have you met Mr. Pencil?

PHOTOGRAPH BY JAMES McGOON

Step Up To High-Resolution Scanning Without The High Cost.

Introducing the ScanMaker IIHR, a 24-bit, color flatbed scanner for heavenly images at a down-to-earth price.

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New! ■ CHICAGO PREVIEW: Windows for 1995

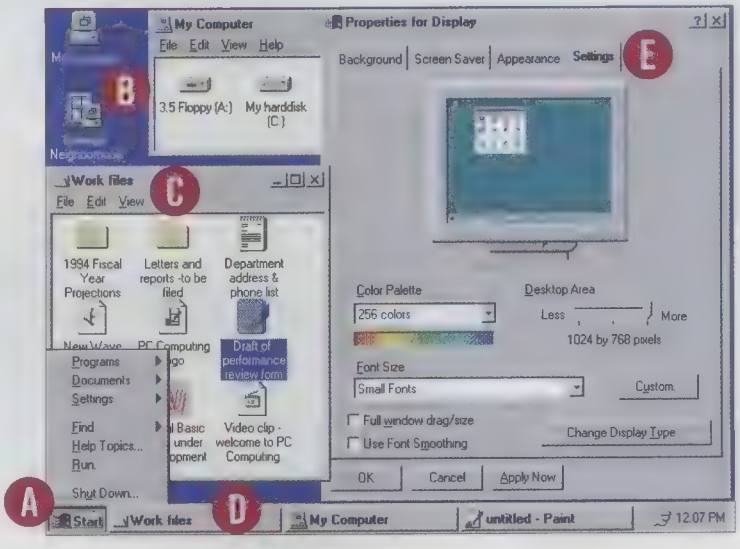
A Windows Worth Waiting For

Warning: If you're happy with Windows 3.1, stop reading right now. Because once you see what's inside the next version of Windows, all the design flaws and petty annoyances you've learned to work around will have all the charm of a leaky faucet. Out of system resources? *Drip.* SYSTEM.INI? WIN.INI? *Drip. Drip.* General Protection Faults? *Stop!*

Whatever it's finally called, whenever it finally arrives, the next version of Windows, code-named Chicago, will be a monumental upgrade. A team of *PC Computing* editors spent two days at Microsoft's Redmond campus in May, working with the first official beta release of Chicago and grilling the system's developers. Despite rough edges, the inevitable beta bugs, and the warning that the system isn't *completely* finished, we came away impressed.

The new Windows interface is sleek and elegant. Cynics will point out similarities between Chicago's new all-in-one desktop and the Macintosh's System 7, or OS/2's Workplace Shell. This is not a bad thing—both systems trounce Windows 3.1 in usability. Countless small improvements and several large ones make Chicago smooth and easy to operate—and much, much more powerful.

OVERVIEW There's Something for Everybody



Easy Windows: The new interface is both dummy-proof and expert-friendly. Program icons sit directly on the desktop. Files show up in nested folders that open in onscreen windows, just like the Macintosh system. Nearly every object on the desktop is customizable. You can even configure Chicago to look and work just like Windows 3.1. But why would you want to? Unlike the confusing Windows 3.1 interface, the new Windows is consistent down to the smallest details.

A. Most common tasks, from launching a program to finding a file, are accessible via the **Start** menu. You can't miss it—at start-up, the words "Click here to begin" bounce along the Task Bar.

B. Program, file, and folder **icons** can now sit directly on the desktop—no more Program Manager. The My Computer and Network Neighborhood icons give instant access to local and network files.

C. From **title bars to buttons**, Chicago's windows have an all-new and totally customizable look.

D. Open folders and programs sit on the **Task Bar**.

E. You configure Chicago from **tabbed dialog boxes**, like this visually intuitive one for monitor settings. (Bonus: You no longer have to restart Windows when you change display resolution.)

Windows for Dummies Turn on your computer, push the big Start button in the lower left corner, and you get instant access to common tasks. Look to the right of the Start button for Chicago's other big usability home run. The Task Bar, which runs along the bottom of the screen (or anywhere else you want it), lets you switch among running tasks with a single click. Also, Pop-up Tool Tips have migrated from Microsoft applications onto the Chicago desktop.

Fortunately, Chicago isn't just for dummies. Windows experts will find that right-click menus are everywhere. The hottest new power feature? Shortcuts, which let you create a pointer to a file without making a copy. You can even mail a shortcut to another Chicago user across a network without losing track of the original file.

New Territory Whole layers of Windows middle management—Program Manager, File Manager, and their peers—have gone into retirement. Instead, meet a much more powerful Windows application called the Explorer (profiled on page 59). Other programs get access to the Explorer's features, too—including the ability to view any of 30 popular file formats—through new File Open and File Save dialog boxes that are automatically grafted in to your existing applications.

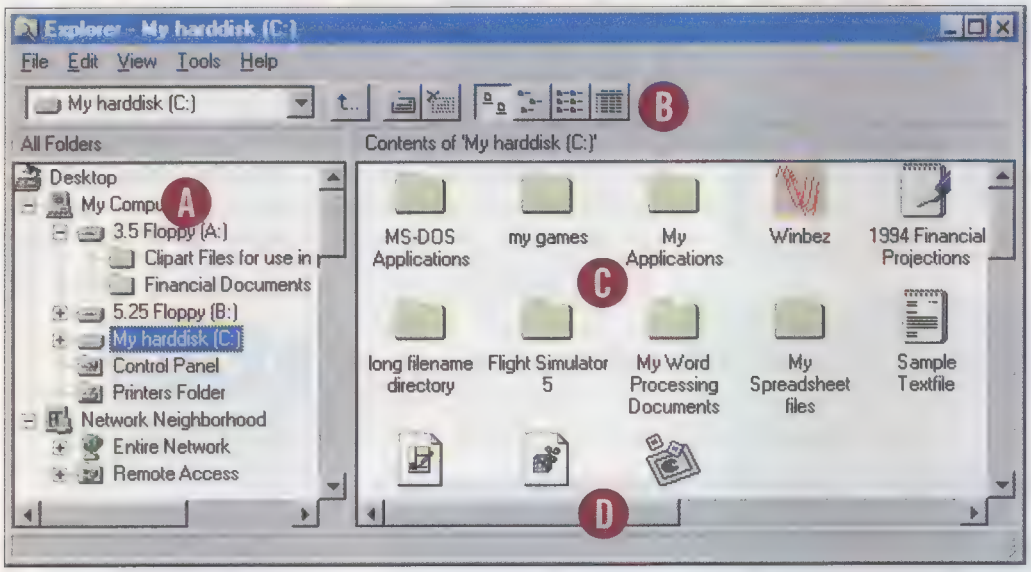
It's hard to imagine that anyone will dislike the clean, sophisticated, intensely visual look and feel of the new

USABILITY: *Microsoft's usability lab deserves credit for Windows' intuitive and simple new interface.*

PERFORMANCE: *New 32-bit file, font, and graphics systems should kick most Windows PCs into overdrive.*

TECHNOLOGY: *Something old, something new, something borrowed, like a lot from Apple and Big Blue.*

VERDICT: *An instant classic—and sure to unleash a tidal wave of powerful new 32-bit apps in 1995.*



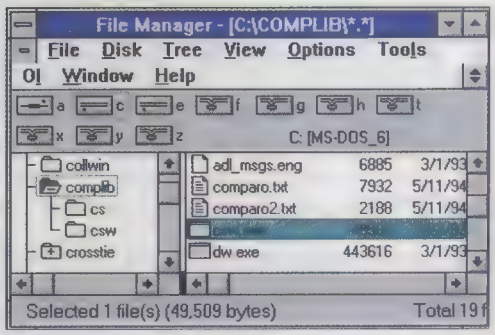
A. Unlike the Windows 3.1 File Manager, the **Explorer** handles all types of objects—files, Control Panel applets, even printers.

B. Icons on the **tool bar** change dynamically, depending on the type of objects you're viewing.

C. The default view displays large icons; you can choose small icons or a list format. In any view, you see **long filenames.** By default, Chicago hides file extensions, which are indicated by icon type.

D. Proportional thumbs, **sliding bars** change size to help you instantly judge the size of a scrolling list.

Bye-Bye File Manager, Hello Explorer: This outline-oriented universal browser (above) lets you look at any object anywhere on your PC, on CD-ROMs, even on the network. Confused by the colorful icons? Just switch to list view. The old File Manager (right) is a thing of the past. Even better, Chicago's new FAT-compatible file system stores a wealth of new information, including long filenames, and the dates that files were created and last accessed.



interface. But for those who do, there's a compatibility option that restores the Windows 3.1 interface, complete with the clunky old File Manager and Program Manager.

No Performance Anxiety

It's too early for Chicago time trials, but you don't need a stopwatch to see some differences. Current 16-bit Windows applications will run faster, thanks to the improved 32-bit Windows file access, graphics, and the TrueType engines. Real 32-bit Windows applications can use preemptive multitasking and multithreading. What's the payoff? Unlike Windows 3.1, Chicago can play a video clip, format a disk, and download a file simultaneously—provided that you give it a speedy PC to work on.

Among Windows propellerheads, there's a raging debate over Chicago's 32-bit-ness. Is it or isn't it? The short answer: A lot of Chicago is 32-bit, but some isn't. Microsoft claims that the remaining 16-bit portions of the code are necessary so that Chicago can run on 4MB systems.

Windows 3.1's worst design flaw—the puny 64K system resource heaps—is improved. While the heaps are still there, Chicago uses other memory pools for much of its internal processing. And Chicago cleans up abandoned resources even when applications don't.

In practical terms, look for Chicago to run acceptably on 386DXs with 4MB of memory. But given the sheer bulk of today's top applications, a 486 or Pentium with 8MB of memory is a better choice. Microsoft is still considering

offering a separate Pentium-optimized version of Chicago.

Old Friends, New Look

As soon as you install Chicago, all your current Windows applications get a new look, complete with chiseled borders, updated common dialog boxes, and new Minimize, Maximize, Close buttons. Inside, the 32-bit TrueType rasterizer makes fonts smoother with built-in antialiasing. The only older applications that won't run under Chicago will be real-mode disk utilities and shell programs that have specific hooks into Windows 3.1.

Chicago bypasses DOS and runs completely in protected mode, although on startup it can stop briefly in real mode to process the now-optional CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT for loading TSRs and old device drivers. But you can demand a command performance anytime: There's a built-in DOS interpreter, and you can run DOS applications in individually tunable virtual machines. Since there are no more real-mode drivers, you get 600K of DOS memory—enough to run essential business applications like, *ahem*, Flight Simulator.

Making Connections

With the introduction of Chicago, Microsoft does away with the "For Workgroups" line of Windows, because every copy sold will come with built-in peer-to-peer networking. For millions of NetWare users, Microsoft is leaving nothing to chance. Chicago will include Microsoft's independently developed 32-bit protected-mode client software, which allows seamless access to NetWare servers; it even supports long filenames.

Look for massive Internet traffic tie-ups within days of Chicago's release, too. Net veterans will shudder at the prospect, but anyone who's struggled with protocol stacks will rejoice at the news that TCP/IP support is built into Chicago. The base system even includes bare-bones Telnet and FTP utilities.

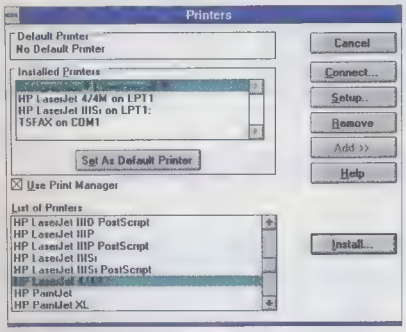
Notebook owners will find it easier to stay connected to the network from the road. Double-click on a setup wizard and Chicago turns any PC into a secure remote access server. Using a notebook or another desktop PC as a client, you can dial in and pull a file off the remote access server or browse the network. A clever utility called the Briefcase will automatically synchronize files between your notebook and your desktop PC, too.

The New Management

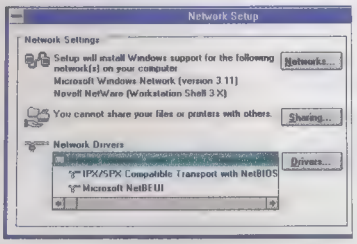
Installing the new operating system should be as easy as slipping a CD-ROM into a caddy (the system is available on

SIDE BY SIDE WINDOWS BEFORE AND AFTER

Windows 3.1

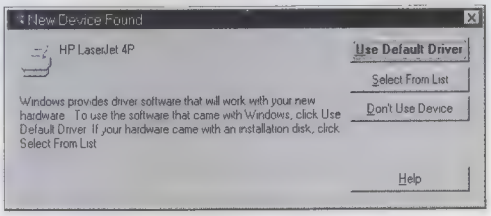


Maze of Printer Options: Windows 3.1 forces you through a labyrinth of buttons and secondary dialog boxes to set up a new printer. And the print spooler is somewhere else entirely.

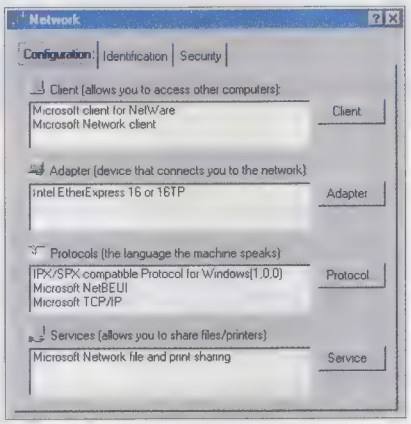


Network Nightmares: Windows for Workgroups 3.11 offers an easy LAN setup utility, but hooking a PC to a network is still a minefield. Adding TCP/IP support requires a pro—or Prozac.

Chicago



Plug and Print: Chicago's Plug-and-Play hardware detection and plain-English dialog boxes make setup a snap. And all printer controls—including the vastly improved print spooler—are in the same place.



Network Niceties: Support for NetWare? Built in. TCP/IP access? Instantaneous. This is how all networks should work.

FILEBOX

Windows "Chicago"

Minimum System Requirements: 386 or better, 4MB of RAM.

Recommended Configuration: 486 or Pentium, 8MB of RAM.

Hard Disk Space Required: 15 to 20MB.

The Competition: Apple's System 7 and IBM's OS/2 2.1 came first, but the new Windows will be a better choice for most desktops.

First Applications: Microsoft and Lotus will scramble to get Office and SmartSuite bundles onto shelves within 90 days of Chicago's release. Most top-selling Windows apps will get Chicago-inspired upgrades in 1995.

Retail price and packaging details not set at press time. Street price for upgrades from Windows 3.1 should be less than $100. Floppy-disk and CD versions will be available. Microsoft Corp. (800) 426-9400

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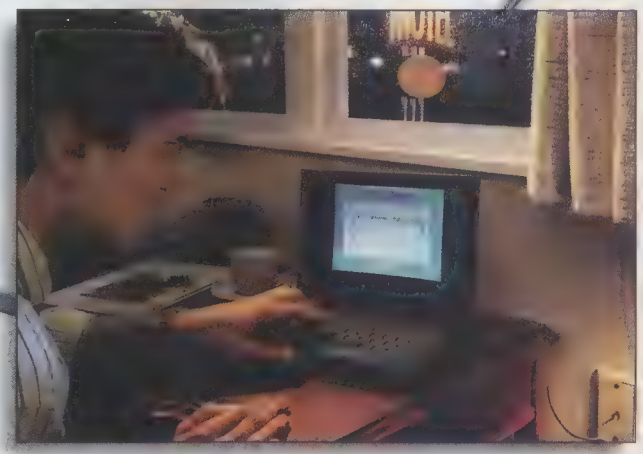

Shorten the distance between you and your LAN—make the LAN Distance call.

How they compare:	IBM LAN Distance	DCA Remote LAN Node	Shiva LANRover	Novell NetWare Connect
Connectivity Options				
Remote to LAN	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Remote to Remote	Yes	No	No	No
LAN to Remote	Yes	No	No	Yes
LAN to LAN	Yes	No	No	Yes
Remote Connectivity Sync, ISDN, X.25 (In addition to ASYNC)	Yes	No	No	Yes
LAN Application Interfaces NetBIOS, NetBEUI, 802.2 (In addition to IP and IPX)	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Security WS Addr., Sec. Admin., Logon Policies, Logon Day/Time (In addition to User ID, Password and Callback)	Yes	No	No	No

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floppies, too). Better device drivers and hardware detection should also minimize compatibility hassles for most video adapters, printers, and modems.

INI files, thankfully, are history, except for skeletal versions required for compatibility with 16-bit Windows software. Instead, crucial configuration details like user preferences, hardware settings, and security are stored in the Registry, a database that you can distribute across a Chicago network. You can also wave good-bye to endless cache and swap-file tinkering—Chicago expands and contracts its buffer space to match available memory.

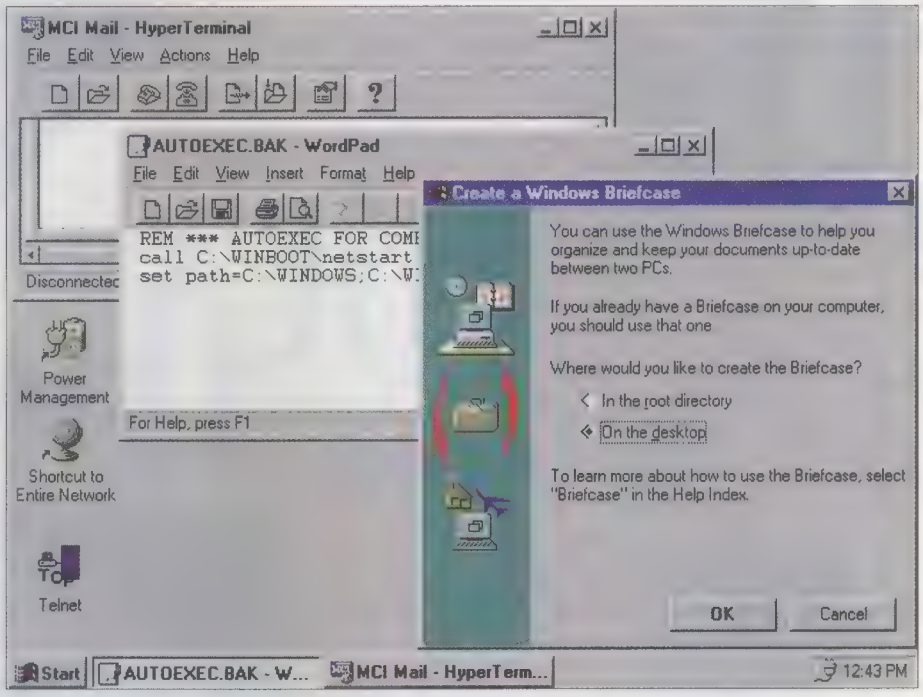
If you're responsible for keeping network users happy and productive, Chicago will help. It has management tools to let administrators create network-wide standard configurations, perform backups, and disable potentially dangerous features like file sharing and remote access.

And then there's Plug and Play, which will slowly turn hardware hassles into a distant memory (see "How It Works," page 222). Plug-and-Play PCs and peripherals have already begun to reach the market. By early next year, you won't be able to buy a system that doesn't support this revolutionary technology.

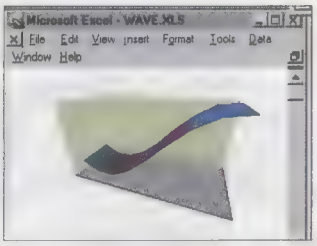
The Waiting Game In fact, the most frustrating feature in Chicago is its schedule. The exact date that shrink-wrapped packages will appear depends on how fast the Chicago team can swat the bugs turned up by tens of thousands of beta testers. Microsoft predicts that Chicago will hit the streets before the end of 1994. There's an outside chance they'll meet that goal. And there's no doubt that 1995 will be the year of Chicago.

If using Windows 3.1 while you wait seems a little like torture . . . well, don't say we didn't warn you. ED BOTT

NEW FEATURES OUR FAVORITE BRAND-NEW APPLETS



It's in the Details: Even the little stuff gets fixed up in Chicago. A very usable new HyperTerminal replaces the boring old Terminal program, WordPad steps in for both Notepad and Write, and synchronizing files between a desktop and portable is made easier with the Briefcase feature. Current Windows apps get the new Chicago look automatically (right).



D Decision Points: Here's What We're All Waiting For

1. At press time, the **first official Chicago beta** was nearly ready.
2. Plan to **upgrade** to the shipping version of Chicago in early 1995.
3. **Budget** for new 32-bit applications starting right after that.

A Sane Upgrade Neurotic IS Managers will want to roll out Chicago slowly—but what else is new? The rest of us will want to upgrade immediately. Nearly everything on our Windows gripe list has been fixed, and Chicago is full of productivity-boosting gems.

While we wait for Chicago, another army of developers is working on the next version of Windows NT. Code-named Cairo, it blends the Chicago shell with the NT kernel (see "The Power and the Glory" on page 64) and an object-oriented file system to create a powerful new operating system for workstations and servers. But Cairo won't arrive until at least ten months after Chicago. Cairo is not the successor to Chicago. Instead, the two operating systems are designed to work together.

How compatible is Chicago? How fast is it? How will it fare in *PC Computing*'s Usability Labs? We'll have the answers, starting next month.

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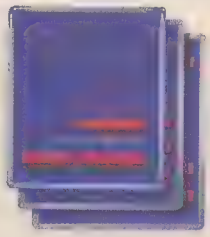

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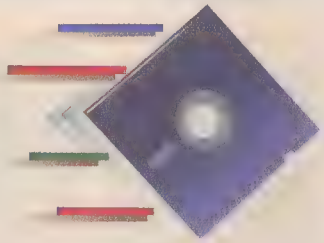

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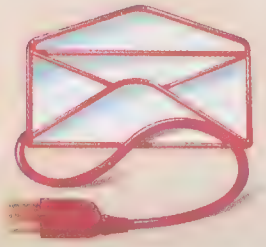

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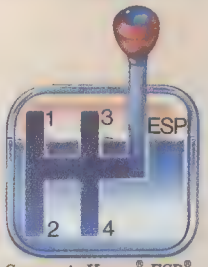

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Circle 152 on reader service card.

The Power and the Glory

USABILITY: *Better crash protection, long filenames.*
PERFORMANCE: *Much, much faster than Windows NT 3.1.*
TECHNOLOGY: *Tighter code, new and better features.*
VERDICT: *With Version 3.5, NT becomes a real corporate operating system.*

Watch a Daytona 500 stock-car race and you remember two images: thunderous speed and 15 car crashes. While Microsoft may have wanted to suggest velocity when it chose the code name "Daytona" for the new 3.5 release of Windows NT, it's safe to assume the bit about crashes wasn't intended. Especially because the brave early adopters of the first release of Windows NT (Version 3.1) were plagued with too much of the latter and not nearly enough of the former.

Add to that the system's huge resource requirements and the involuntary waiting period for the introduction of NetWare client software, and you have one operating system desperately in need of an upgrade. Windows NT 3.5 addresses these complaints.

Well Tuned Windows NT 3.5 needs less RAM than does Version 3.1. In the earlier version, you couldn't get a speeding ticket in a school zone on a system with less than 16MB of RAM. But Version 3.5, even with just 8MB of RAM, looks and feels faster than the original (see Winbench performance chart, above right).

NT 3.1 did offer a great advantage over ordinary Windows 3.1: crash protection from the horror of one application bringing down the entire system. There was only one problem: It worked only with 32-bit applications, of which there are still, a year later, only a few. In NT 3.1, all of your 16-bit applications shared the same piece of track, and if one crashed, the others piled right into it.

In NT 3.5, each 16-bit Windows and DOS application gets its own virtual DOS machine (VDM). You can run your old applications right into the wall and the other applications will keep running. It's real multitasking of Windows applications, at last.

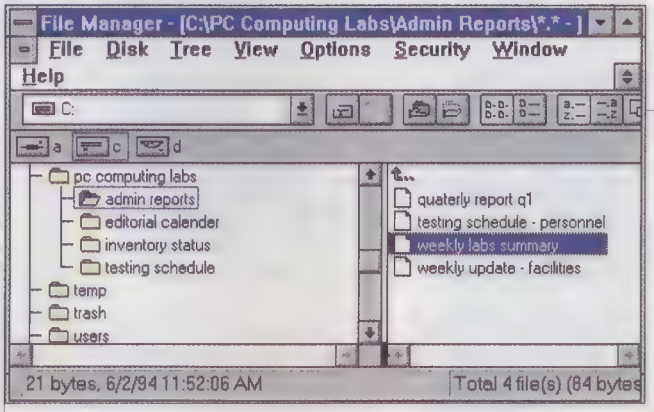
Share the Road Although applications can no longer smack into each other, they can share data, thanks to support for OLE 2.0. Although it was not available in the beta release we tested, full OLE 2.0 support is planned for Windows NT 3.5, and it should let you drag and drop data between all 16- and 32-bit applications.

NT's networking has really improved in two main areas. First, all the pieces you need to connect to a Novell server are included in the box. Second, TCP/IP performance in Version 3.5 is much faster, and Serial Line Internet Protocol and Point-to-Point Protocol (SLIP and PPP) are built right in.

The NT 3.5 file system fixes the 8-character limit of DOS, and allows filenames of up to 255 characters long, even on standard file systems. Long filename support works only with the applications that support it, however (Microsoft, not surprisingly, has versions of several apps in the works).

Also new in Daytona is OpenGL graphics, the 3-D graphics engine developed by Silicon Graphics. Applications supporting OpenGL can display workstation-class graphics at workstation speeds.

Windows NT 3.5 is a far better corporate operating system than the previous release. On the server, its multitasking and security features are as strong as ever. On the desktop? Obviously, NT isn't for everybody, but the system has muscle that regular Windows lacks. Version 3.5's networking and reliability features, coupled with its lower system requirements, mean more desktop users can take advantage of the power it offers. ADAM MEYERSON

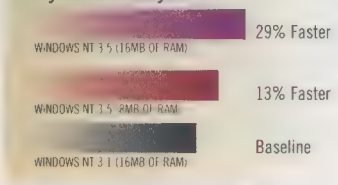


It's Fast: The Microsoft hot-rod team has finally devoted enough time under the hood of NT to turn Version 3.5 into a more efficient operating system. Even with less RAM, it runs rings around NT 3.1.

The Long and Short of It: Windows NT 3.5 supports long filenames even if your disk is formatted with a standard FAT (file allocation table). The previous version had long names too, but only if you used the NT-specific NTFS format. However, you can't take advantage of this feature unless your apps support it. Other ease-of-use bonuses: NetWare and TCP/IP client software in the box, superior crash protection, and 32-bit OLE support for all apps.

Windows Performance

Daytona Blasts By NT 3.1



NOTE: WINBENCH 4.0 MEASURES GRAPHICS AND DISK PERFORMANCE OF PCs RUNNING WINDOWS 3.1

FILEBOX

WINDOWS NT 3.5

Minimum System Requirements: 25MHz 386 or better, 12MB of RAM.

Recommended System: Runs great with 12MB of RAM on a 66MHz 486.

Hard Disk Footprint: 70MB of free disk space (20MB of which is used as virtual memory).

Graphics: The Silicon Graphics OpenGL interface for 3-D graphics is included, as is Video for Windows 1.1.

Price and ship date unavailable
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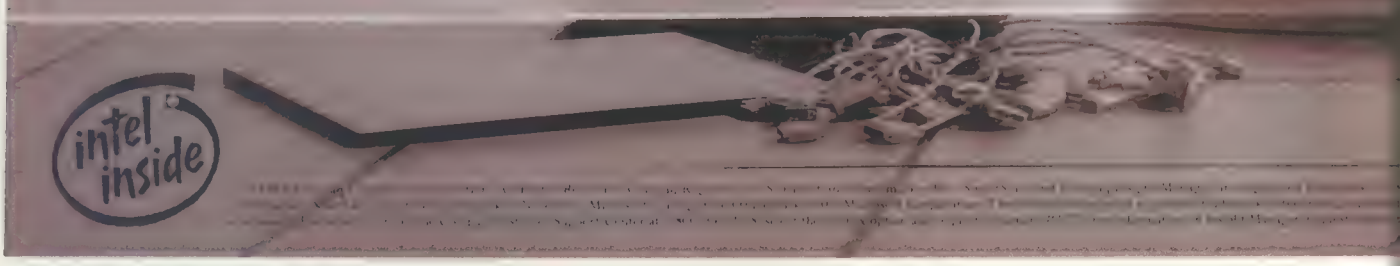

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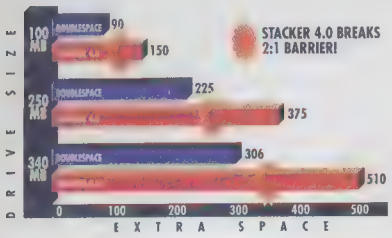

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Circle 268 on reader service card.

64-Bit Video from ATI, Diamond, and Number Nine

The 64-Bit Graphical Question

Graphics accelerators are taking a tip from the Pentium: 64-bit is the way to go. We've already seen Matrox's pioneering efforts (see New! August 1993, page 68); we nominated its MGA Impression for an MVP Award last year. That was the trickle, and here's the flood—a flurry of new 64-bit boards including ATI Technologies' Graphics Pro Turbo, Diamond Computer Systems' Stealth 64, and Number Nine Computer's #9GXE64 Pro.

As with Pentiums, all 64-bit graphics cards blast bits like there's no tomorrow, though some are faster than others. All three boards we looked at this month support refresh rates of 72Hz or higher, even at 1,280 by 1024 pixels. They also all come in VL-Bus and PCI varieties, though the PCI boards have a slight usability edge: They configure themselves.

Mo' Better Color These next-generation boards bring more than performance gains to the graphics world—they also add color. Using speedy dual-ported VRAM instead of the slower dynamic RAM (DRAM) common on lower-cost boards, the 2MB versions of these three cards support accelerated 16-bit (near–photo-quality) color at 1,024 by 768; the 4MB configurations support rich 24-bit color for rendering true photo quality at 1,024 by 768.

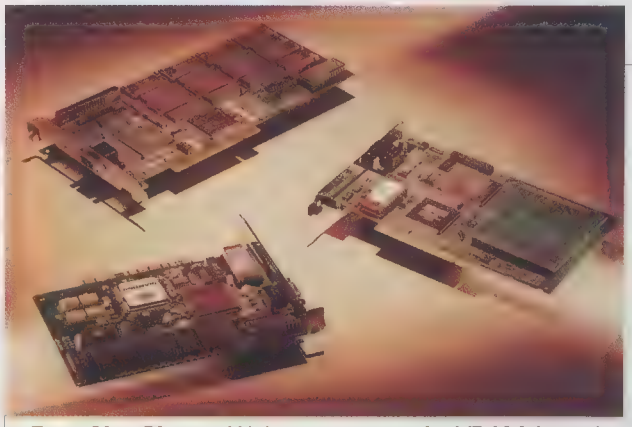
Anyone who struggled with last year's epidemic of buggy video drivers will be happy to know that board makers appear to have learned their lesson: All of the drivers we tested this year were stable and well-behaved. And Windows utilities for selecting the board's resolution, colors, power-management options, and other features are now (happily) standard equipment.

Our favorite utility comes with Number Nine's card. It can adjust a board's refresh rate under Windows—a DOS-based trial by fire with the boards from Diamond and ATI. But Diamond's utility also has a quirk: It hides itself in the Control Panel, where you're certain not to find it unless you read the manual.

Quick and Easy The clear performance champ was ATI's 4MB $699 Graphics Pro Turbo—the speediest graphics card ever to zoom across our test bench. Driven by ATI's mach64GX graphics chip, it even accelerated video playback.

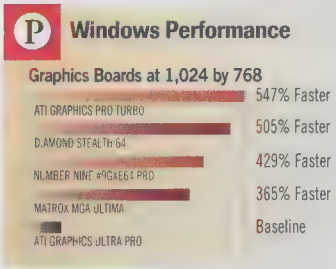
For those on a budget, there's Diamond's Stealth 64, which is the most affordable board of the three we looked at.

None of the boards that we tested will leave you drumming your fingers impatiently. If we were stranded on a desert island with only one video board, we'd take the #9GXE64 Pro for its emphasis on usability. But every now and then we'd probably wonder if we should have settled on the fastest board we've ever seen, ATI's Graphics Pro Turbo. WENDY TAYLOR



Fast, Not Cheap: With street prices for VRAM-based 64-bit cards hovering around $450, these cards stress performance and features over price. They have the processing muscle to take the wait out of Windows.

Pentium Envy: These new 64-bit boards flew past Matrox's first-generation 64-bit MGA Ultima—and ATI's older 32-bit Graphics Ultra Pro.



USABILITY: *The crown goes to Number Nine's #9GXE64 Pro.*
PERFORMANCE: *All three leave VGA in the dust. Graphics Pro is fastest.*
TECHNOLOGY: *These winners combine 64-bit processing and VRAM speed.*
VERDICT: *A must for high-level, high-res, high-color work.*

FILEBOX

ATI Graphics Pro Turbo

Resolutions: Up to 1,280 by 1,024 at 76Hz vertical refresh rate, 24-bit color at 1,280 by 1,024 (4MB model).

$449 (2MB)
$699 (4MB)
ATI Technologies
(905) 882-2600
Reader Service No. 601

Diamond Stealth 64

Resolutions: Up to 1,280 by 1,024 at 100Hz vertical refresh rate, 24-bit color at 1,152 by 882 (4MB model).

$399 (2MB)
$599 (4MB)
Diamond Computer Systems
(800) 380-0030, (408) 736-2000
Reader Service No. 602

Number Nine #9GXE64 Pro

Resolutions: Up to 1,280 by 1,024 at 76Hz vertical refresh rate, 1,600 by 1,200 at 60Hz, 24-bit color at 1,152 by 870 (4MB model).

$499 (2MB)
$749 (4MB)
Number Nine Computer Corp.
(800) 438-6463
(617) 674-0009
Reader Service No. 603

PHOTOGRAPH BY ARNOLD TIOSEJO

HP's Spectacular Spectrums

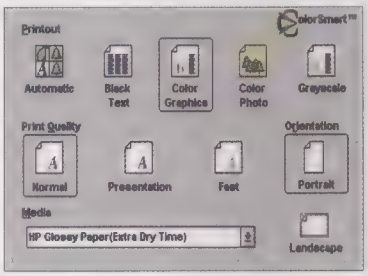
USABILITY: *ColorSmart turns you into a color genius.*
PERFORMANCE: *Looks great but prints slow.*
TECHNOLOGY: *The pinnacle of color ink jet printing for but a song.*
VERDICT: *You've waited entirely too long not to buy this color printer.*

Why don't you have a color printer? Too expensive, perhaps? You think color printers can't turn out high-quality text? Well, here's the truth: Your excuses for not buying a color printer aren't worth their weight in ink. You *can* get great-looking, inexpensive color and impressive text quality out of the same printer. Here's how: Get a Hewlett-Packard DeskJet 560C.

If you're intimidated by the world of full-spectrum printing—by concepts such as color accuracy, color matching, and dithering, for example—don't worry. HP's ColorSmart technology handles the gory details for you. The DeskJet 560C is the first HP product that supports ColorSmart, which analyzes your pages before they print to make sure you don't waste precious pennies and paper by printing your document over and over until it looks its best. You tell ColorSmart some of the specifics about your document, such as whether it's a scanned photographic image or a basic color graphic—and ColorSmart will optimize your output so that you get the best possible results.

Of course, if you like dealing with the complexities of color, you have the option of overriding ColorSmart and making your own noncolor-enhancing adjustments.

Penny-Pinching Palette: Hewlett Packard's DeskJet 560C printer, which replaces the company's DeskJet 550C, brings new meaning to the term *low-cost color.* How does the speed rate? We've seen better: The lower-end DeskJet 500C performed faster than the 560C in our tests, but the masterpieces that you can produce with this new printer make it well worth the wait.



Easy Excellence: HP's ColorSmart technology makes you a color pro in a flash. Just provide some document information and let HP do the rest.

Looks Matter The colors from the DeskJet 560C are brilliant and vibrant—very impressive, especially when compared to output from HP's lower-end sibling, the $485 DeskJet 500C. In our graphics presentation test (text and graphics), the colors in our bar charts were rich and smooth, though there was some bleeding between black outlines and colored bars. However, when we set the ColorSmart options to print graphics in presentation mode using high-quality glossy paper, we saw even better results and absolutely no bleeding between colors. Using all of the optimization options and glossy paper puts this printer into the major league alongside products costing two to three times as much. We did have some paper-handling problems with the glossy stock, however, which forced us to set the paper manually in the output bin before the document would continue printing.

There is one drawback to the ColorSmart technology: slow printing speeds. The DeskJet 560C took almost twice as long to print our presentation using ColorSmart as it did in the printer's default mode. And overall, the 560C's speed was less than stellar. But the output is so impressive you won't mind waiting.

Money Matters While your initial financial investment in a DeskJet 560C is relatively low, don't forget to consider the long-term costs. The 560C uses two ink cartridges—one black and one color (cyan, magenta, and yellow in one cartridge)—so you don't have to waste colored ink when printing straight black text. However, if your color printing includes heavy use of one color, say magenta, you'll need to replace your entire color cartridge when that single color runs out. Your cost per page will vary depending on what kinds of images you print and what type of paper you use. Expect to pony up at least 5 to 10 cents for each page of color (with typical 15 percent ink coverage).

The DeskJet 560C is an impressive machine. It packs a punch for a relatively low price. With its magnificent colors and impressive text quality, this is the printer that can finally push you over the color edge. KYLA K. CARLSON

FILEBOX

DeskJet 560C

Resolution: 600-by-300 dot-per-inch black and white; 300-dpi color.

Speed: 2 pages per minute (ppm) for black in normal mode; 4 minutes per page (mpp) in normal color mode; 7 mpp in presentation color mode.

Ink Cartridge Costs: $31.95 for black; $34.95 for color.

Ink Cartridge Life: 1,000 pages for black at 5 percent average coverage; 676 pages for color at 15 percent average coverage.

$719
Hewlett-Packard
(800) 752-0900
Reader Service No. 604

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARIO PARNELLI

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Price or Pizzazz? You Can't Lose

"Sing to me, baby," you croon, grinning at your Texas Instruments' TravelMate 4000M, as passengers next to you gape in disbelief at the multimedia road show dancing on your tray table. The 4000M cuts no corners: It has a 25MHz 486SX CPU (or an optional 75MHz DX4), a 200MB hard drive, a built-in Media Vision sound chip, and a gorgeous 8.5-inch active-matrix display. Not bad for a machine with a traveling weight of 6.4 pounds on its own, 11 pounds with optional CD-ROM drive and speakers attached.

Maybe you're not the flashy type. Dell's Latitude 433C-170—which marks the company's reentry into the notebook market—is a sleek, demure, no-nonsense business machine that might be just what you're looking for. Powered by Intel's new 33MHz 486SX, it features a 9.5-inch dual-scan passive-matrix display, a 170MB hard drive, and costs $2,448.

Road Show Both machines prove that you don't need to be on a CEO's budget to afford a full-featured portable. The 4000M, in particular, features MIDI, microphone, and jacks for speaker jacks. Its optional $849 CD-ROM docking station attaches through a built-in SCSI port and adds stereo speakers, a CD-ROM drive, and an extra battery. It increases the notebook's footprint by barely a smidge (although it doubles its thickness). No need for CDs? Pack a couple of lightweight speakers, and let your presentations speak for themselves. Total traveling weight is still under seven pounds.

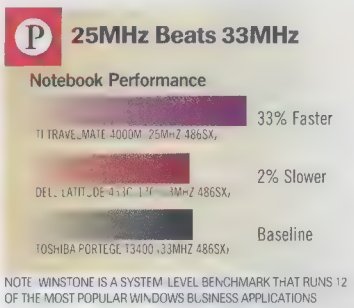
The 4000M has two side-mounted PCMCIA Type II slots that hide behind a door you can either flip open or remove entirely—an excellent design. An eraserhead pointing device sits below the space bar so that you can manipulate it easily with your thumbs or index fingers.

Key Features Despite a superb keyboard layout with dual Alt keys on either side of the space bar and independent document-control keys, the undersized cursor controls repeatedly tripped up our fingers. Otherwise, we found keyboard response excellent.

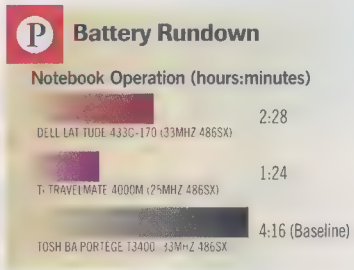
The Dell Latitude 433C-170 also wins high marks for usability, despite the marble-sized trackball oddly situated to the right of the space bar. Key layout is good: Cursor controls sit intuitively at the lower right of the board, but the full-sized Page Up and Page Down keys double as Home and End keys. You'll find distinctive spaces to the right of F4 and F8 for fingers that grope their way around function keys.

The Latitude display is big, sharp, and reasonably bright. There's only one PCMCIA Type II slot (and if anyone has a theory about how to remove a PC card once it's installed, we'd love to hear it). Despite these nits, the Latitude 433C-170 has a shrewd, plain-Jane feature set at an irresistible price. **MARTY JEROME**

Dell's Got a Good Latitude: The company's new notebook (above left) is well-priced, slim, and attractive. But if you have a multimedia show to take on the road, you should take TI's TravelMate 4000M (above right) and its optional CD-ROM add-on.



Not Too Slow: Despite its slower CPU, TI's TravelMate is faster than Dell's Latitude and has better video and hard disk design.



Running Time: The Latitude runs longer than the TravelMate—important if you do a lot of work far from an outlet.

USABILITY: *Dell's got a great keyboard, TI has a TrackPoint-like mouse.*
PERFORMANCE: *TI's TravelMate 4000M blasted past the Latitude notebook.*
TECHNOLOGY: *TI's battery-powered multimedia traveling package wins.*
VERDICT: *Take the TravelMate along for hot presentations on the road.*

FILEBOX

Latitude 433C-170

Configuration Tested: 33MHz 486, 8MB of RAM (expandable to 20MB), 170MB hard drive.

Weight: 6.4 pounds.

Support: One-year warranty, toll-free support.

$2,448
Dell Computer Corp.
(800) 613-3355
(512) 338-4400
Reader Service No. 605

TravelMate 4000M

Configuration Tested: 25MHz 486, 4MB of RAM (expandable to 20MB), 200MB hard drive.

Weight: 6.4 pounds, 11 pounds with hardware options.

Support: One-year warranty, toll-free support.

$3,399
Texas Instruments
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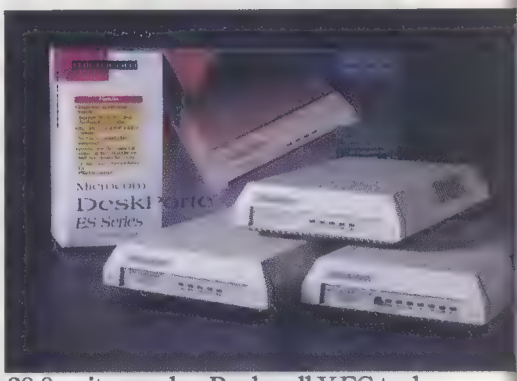

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Approach 3.0

A Fresh Approach to Databases

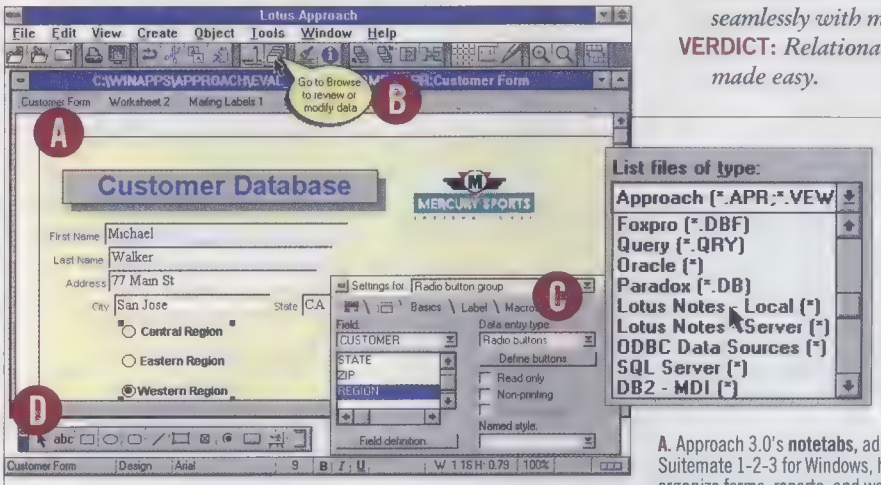
USABILITY: *Powerful tools and intuitive interface.*
PERFORMANCE: *Supposedly a screamer; beta code's slow.*
TECHNOLOGY: *Works seamlessly with most data.*
VERDICT: *Relational power made easy.*

Someone forgot to tell the developers of Lotus's Approach 3.0 that relational databases are supposed to be confusing.

Delightfully missing from this powerful program is the arcane terminology, cryptic code, and complicated report generators that database developers have struggled with for years. Instead, Approach 3.0 offers a superbly crafted point-and-click interface that feels as cozy as bunny slippers to anyone who's mastered a spreadsheet or word processor.

Approach 3.0 is a full-strength relational database with all the tools you need to build useful, usable applications in record time. It's not for professional developers—there's not enough control over the fine details of applications—but it's ideal for small businesses and departments that need to capture data and quickly turn it into great-looking reports.

Note that this review is based on a beta version of the software. Not fully sorted out or optimized for speed, it gives us a clear picture of what the program can do, although the version we examined was not quite ready for shrink-wrap.



Smart, Real Smart: With this release, a from-the-roots rewrite, Approach takes the spotlight in Lotus's SmartSuite package. The graceful new interface, which owes a huge debt to usability testing, offers a detailed look at what to expect from the next versions of every Lotus application, including OLE 2.0 support. It's also e-mail-enabled: One click sends your report over cc:Mail or Notes. Thanks to its exclusive PowerKey technology, Approach provides blazing access to external data files of many different formats—including, for the first time, Lotus Notes (above, right).

A. Approach 3.0's **notetabs**, adapted from Suitemate 1-2-3 for Windows, help organize forms, reports, and worksheets.

B. Usability enhancements include **balloon help** (accessible with a single right-mouse click) and a collection of intelligent Wizard-like Lotus Assistants.

C. InfoBoxes—compact control centers that provide instant access to styles, settings, and formats—are Approach 3.0's usability home run. The superbly organized dialog boxes are a vast improvement over the text-heavy property boxes found in Microsoft Access 2.0.

D. Common tasks are one-click easy, thanks to a **floating tool palette** that appears when you design a form or report.

Lotus-ized Interface

Earlier versions of Approach featured an idiosyncratic interface that didn't always adhere to Windows conventions. Approach 3.0, however, could serve as a model for how to build an innovative and intuitive interface. It doesn't just borrow the best ideas from other applications, it improves on them. And all the standard Lotus interface elements—SmartIcons and an active status bar at the bottom of the screen, for example—are fully integrated into the program.

Unlike earlier releases, which forced you to define forms and reports for each database, Approach 3.0 offers an optional spreadsheet-style view of data in rows and columns. You can accept the defaults or define multiple worksheet views using only the fields you need, taken from related tables.

Creating a relational join is a simple visual process, as it is in Approach's main competitor, Microsoft's Access 2.0. You open the files you want joined, drag a field name from one list to another, and you're done.

With this release, Lotus unveils Lotus Assistants, step-by-step guides for building forms, reports, crosstabs, worksheets, mailing labels, and charts. Assistants are dynamic, unlike Microsoft's Wizards, which force you to follow a narrowly defined path to accomplish a task.

The online documentation, a sore spot for anyone who worked with Approach 2.1, is comprehensive and useful. Stay-on-top help offers detailed instructions for those who prefer to work on their own.

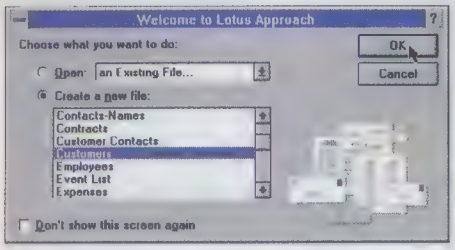
Pretty and Productive

Approach 3.0's interface for designing forms and reports is intensely visual—a marked contrast to the text-heavy property boxes found in Access.

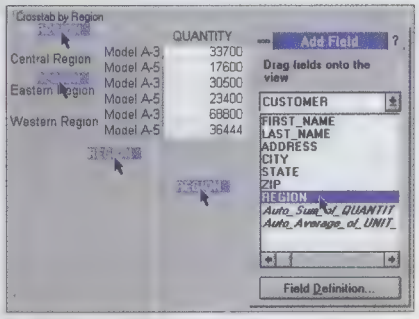
Building a worksheet, for example, is as simple as dragging field names onto a blank screen. Want to turn the worksheet into a crosstab? No problem. Just drag a field from the top of the screen to the left-hand edge, and Approach builds an Improv-style view of your data.

With most database managers, creating radio buttons, check boxes, and drop-down lists are the tasks that dump you into code-slinging territory. Approach, on the other hand, turns them into fill-in-the-blank exercises. Setting field validation properties and defining a data input mask are equally straightforward. And for a guaranteed crowd pleaser, you should check out

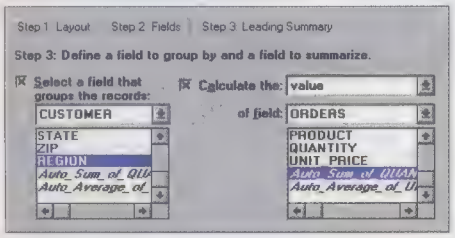
GUIDED TOUR THE AMAZING CODE-FREE DATABASE



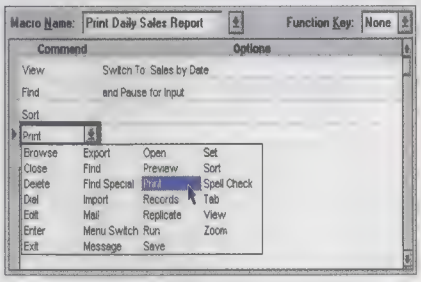
Start Here: Ready-made database templates make an easy-to-use application downright telepathic. If you want to set up a fairly typical database, just fire up one of the 51 templates.



Row, Row, Row: Worksheet views give you a snapshot of data in an easy-to-read grid format. Turning a worksheet into a crosstab is simple.



Beyond Wizards: Lotus's Assistants are more flexible than Microsoft's Wizards. You can run through the steps in your own order. This Report Assistant, for example, lets you skip the first two steps when editing a report.



No Code Required: You can attach point-and-click macros to objects and events, creating shortcuts to application development without writing code. You can also attach macros to buttons, fields, or events.

FILEBOX

Approach 3.0

Minimum System Requirements: 4MB of RAM and 386 or higher.

Hard Disk Footprint: About 5MB for a full installation.

The Competition: Access 2.0 in power, Claris's FileMaker Pro in ease of use.

Network Features: SQL access via PowerKey, a Lotus-developed driver for accessing dBASE, FoxPro, Paradox, SQL back ends, and Access files. PowerKey can also use ODBC-compatible back ends.

Security: You can set both table-level and field-level security (depending on the database format you've chosen).

$495 (upgrade and introductory prices not set at press time)
Lotus Development Corp.
Approach Database Division
(800) 343-5414, (415) 306-7890
Reader Service No. 620

the brilliantly simple report writer, which can create a data summary in a single click.

Making Connections Approach has no native data format (although its default data type is dBASE IV). Instead, it's a master of mixed environments. And this version expands its scope considerably. Approach 3.0 lets you work in dBASE, FoxPro, or Paradox format, and for the first time, it directly reads Paradox 4.5 files—no import required.

Straight out of the box, Approach 3.0 works across multiple networks with Novell's NetWare and NetWare Lite, Microsoft's Windows for Workgroups and LAN Manager, and Artisoft's LANtastic. Also included: built-in links to Oracle, Microsoft, and Sybase SQL back ends. You'll need a MicroDecisionware gateway to get to DB2 data.

Offices that have standardized on Lotus applications, such as 1-2-3 and Notes, will find the integration nearly irresistible. You can use 1-2-3 as a front end for Approach (or vice versa), eliminating the pain of transition for spreadsheet users. And because Approach can directly manipulate Notes databases, it can put a friendlier face on Notes without sacrificing the latter's security and robust replication.

In previous incarnations, Approach saddled would-be developers with a clunky macro builder that was limited in power and hard to use. This version has an elegant macro designer that resembles the one in Access 2.0. Each macro can consist of an unlimited number of steps. You add steps by choosing one of 38 verbs and selecting options from an onscreen display.

Macros can trigger other macros based on programmed conditions. For example, you can define a macro that checks the system clock and prints a sales report every Monday. Macros can be attached to buttons, fields, or events such as entering or exiting a field—you can have a warning message pop up whenever the amount in a currency field is unusually high.

A clever designer can use forms and macros to build a robust and easy-to-navigate Approach application, all without writing a line of code.

Bottom Line Ultimately, Approach 3.0 is a liberating product: It frees the knowledge worker from the shackles of IS. It's both powerful and friendly, productivity-enhancing without being cutesy. It's the database we've all been waiting for. **ED BOTT**

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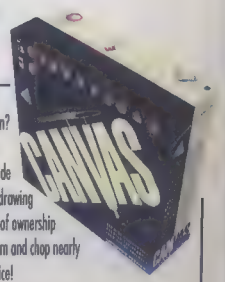

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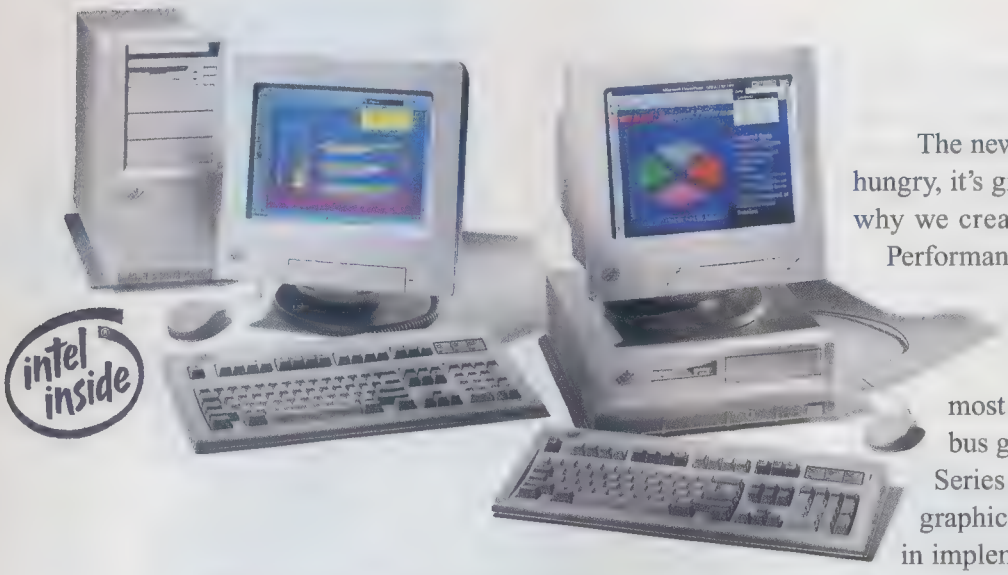

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• 270MB[2] HD, 4MB RAM	• 270MB[2] HD, 4MB RAM
• Desktop with 5 slots, 5 bays	• Desktop with 5 slots, 5 bays
• VESA local bus	• VESA local bus
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The ValuePoint configurations listed above include an IBM Enhanced 101-Key Keyboard & Mouse, 1MB Video Memory (upgradable to 2MB), DOS & Windows preloaded and a 14V monitor.

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IBM Credit Lease $96/month[1]	IBM Credit Lease $133/month[1]
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• One Type III or two Type II PCMCIA slots	• One Type III or two Type II PCMCIA slots
• Over $800 worth of preloaded business software	• Over $800 worth of preloaded business software
• 1-year International Traveler's Warranty	• 3-year International Traveler's Warranty

The ThinkPad configurations listed above include a 3.5" 1.44MB diskette drive, 85-Key Keyboard with integrated TrackPoint II™, NiMH battery and AC adapter, and a 9.5" VGA color display monitor.

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IBM Lease Price $51/month[1]	IBM Lease Price $121/month[1]
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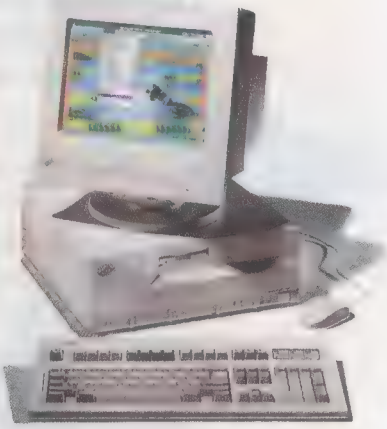
• 212MB[2] HD	• 527MB[2] HD, 8MB RAM
• 4MB RAM	• PCI local bus video and slots
• VESA local bus video	• 4 slots, 5 bays
• 3 ISA slots, 3 bays	• 3.5" 1.44MB disk drive
• 3.5" 1.44MB disk drive	• DOS and Windows
• DOS and Windows	• IBM Enhanced 101-Key Keyboard and Mouse
• IBM Basic 101-Key Keyboard and Mouse	

Both systems include a 14V color monitor which has an actual viewable screen size of 13 inches when measured diagonally.



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• Type I or Type II PCMCIA slots	• Type I or Type II PCMCIA slots
• 3.5" 1.44MB external disk drive	• 3.5" 1.44MB disk drive
• 7.4" VGA mono display (actual viewable screen size is 7.24" when measured diagonally)	• 9.2" VGA color display (actual viewable screen size is 8.97" when measured diagonally)
• 81-Key Keyboard	• 85-Key Keyboard

The ThinkPad configurations listed above include integrated TrackPoint II, NiMH battery and AC adapter, DOS™ and a trial subscription to PRODIGY.®[6]

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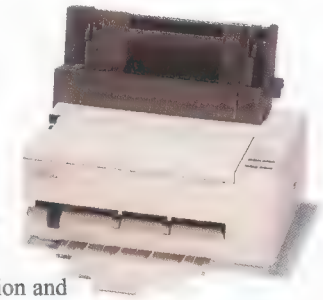
17V $999
15V $579
14V $429

The 17V, 15V, and 14V monitors have an actual viewable screen size of 15.8, 13.7, and 13 inches, respectively, when measured diagonally.



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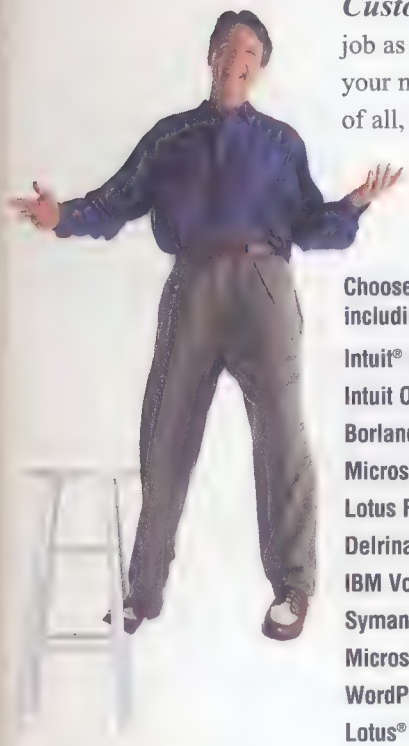

CustomerFit doesn't stop with hardware. You'll need the right software for the job as well. With Soft Select,[8] we'll load, test and optimize popular software to run on your machine, so your new PC is ready to hit the ground running when it arrives. Best of all, software installation is only $10 — for as many applications as you want.

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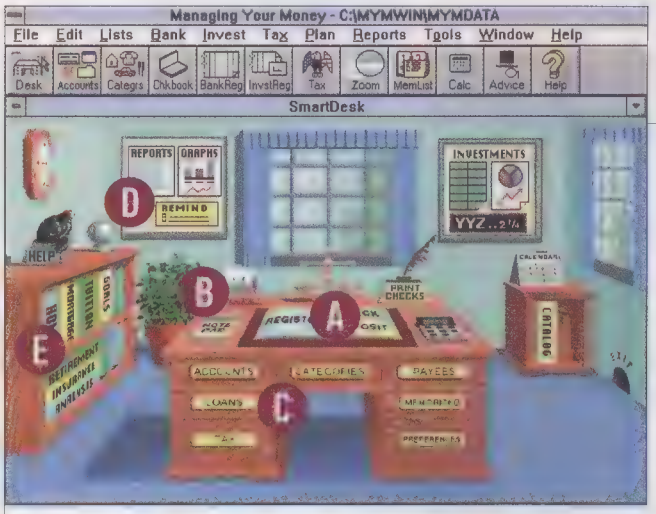
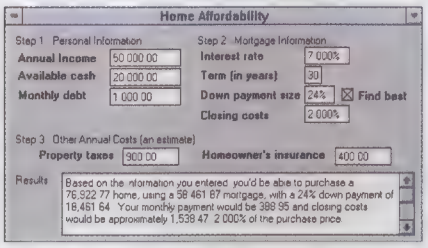
PERFORMANCE: *Quicker than Quicken.*
TECHNOLOGY: *Everything an individual or small business needs to manage finances.*
VERDICT: *Looks good, works better.*

"Easy to use" is the most overworked cliché in computing, but the interface in the first-ever Windows version of MECA Software's Managing Your Money is more than easy to use—it's a breakthrough for the personal finance category. More than just a work-alike of Intuit's market-leading Quicken, Managing Your Money provides you with an object-oriented simulation of your home office called SmartDesk.

SmartDesk isn't just cute; it truly adds functionality. Each object on the screen is the functional equivalent of a pull-down menu, but far more intuitive. Of course, Managing Your Money for Windows has the usual menu and quick-action buttons for those who prefer them, but new users and even experienced veterans can save mouse clicks and mind time by using the checkbook, calculator, and other objects in and around SmartDesk.



Buy a House! Take a minute to enter financial information, and Managing Your Money will find the kind of home you can afford.



A. No more searching menus for the right entry point to your finances. Your **checkbook, check register, and deposit slips** are conveniently laid out right on your desktop.

B. SmartDesk also serves as a **launch pad** for many common Windows utilities, like the calculator, notepad, and card file, but you can substitute your own favorite applets.

C. Your account, memorized transactions, and categories lists are represented as your desk's **file drawers.** You can also organize tax features and file management there.

D. Stored around the room are **billboards** for reports, graphs, reminders, and investments.

E. Bookcases house mortgage, tuition, and other financial calculators, as well as ways to analyze your retirement and insurance needs.

Financial Food Groups Managing Your Money for Windows focuses on the four areas that define most people's finances—banking, investments, taxes, and planning.

The banking section is similar to Quicken's except that it lacks support for the online services IntelliCharge and CheckFree. On the other hand, Managing Your Money combines a scrollable check register and a blank check on a single screen—or on separate screens, if you wish.

Managing Your Money's tax planner is superior to Quicken's. You don't have to design a report or buy a separate add-on to get this functionality. Right out of the box, Managing Your Money gives you an up-to-date readout of your tax liability at the push of a button. The tax calculator dialog box instantly pops up with subtotals from the most commonly used tax forms so that you can perform what-if calculations and find out the tax consequences of any given financial move. At the year's end, you can easily export your data to MECA's TaxCut, ChipSoft's TurboTax, or any tax program that supports the TXF format.

Similarly, the investment analysis window gives you a quick look at the status of all your investments sliced in a variety of ways. Like Quicken, Managing Your Money lets you track the cost, price changes, annual and simple appreciation, and dividends on stocks, bonds, and mutual funds—even collectibles. But with Managing Your Money, you also can track puts and calls, strike prices, and expiration dates, as well as esoterica like beta coefficient and industry performance.

True to its name, Managing Your Money has a strong planning module. You can create budgets for up to three years at a time and compare those to actual budgets in ready-made and customizable reports and graphs. More important, the expert advice of Andrew Tobias is always just a right-mouse click away.

Should You Switch? If you're a longtime Quicken user, you probably won't want to convert your data and work style to Managing Your Money. MECA made the import easy, but remember that the easiest interface is the one you already know. For new users, however, Managing Your Money for Windows is the first real competitor we've seen for Quicken. It's truly unique and definitely worth a try for the low $35-to-$40 street price. MIKE HOGAN

FILEBOX

Managing Your Money

System Requirements: 4MB of RAM; hard disk space.

Competitors: Quicken.

File Formats Supported: Imports files from Quicken DOS or Windows, Managing Your Money DOS Versions 9 and 10, Microsoft Money, CA-Simply Money, and others. Be warned, you'll still have to ease your data into the new program—not all information is imported.

$79.95; $29.95 for upgrades
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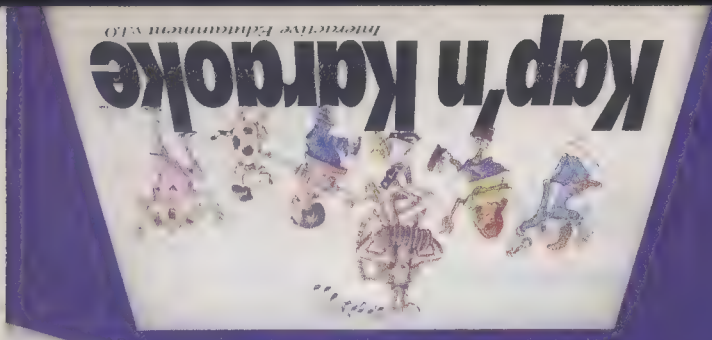
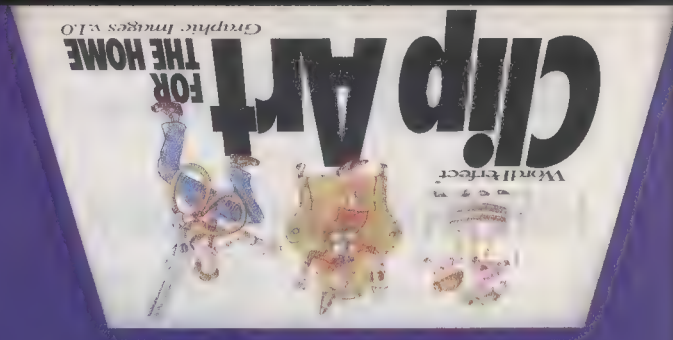
Reader Service No. 624





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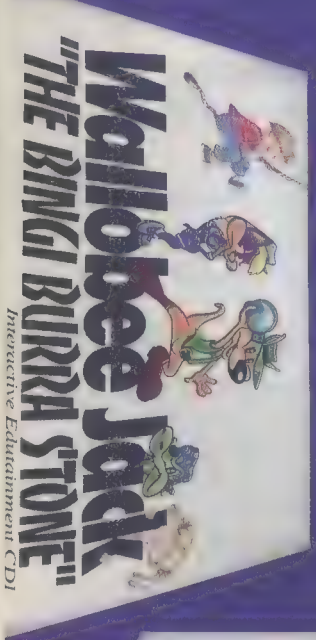

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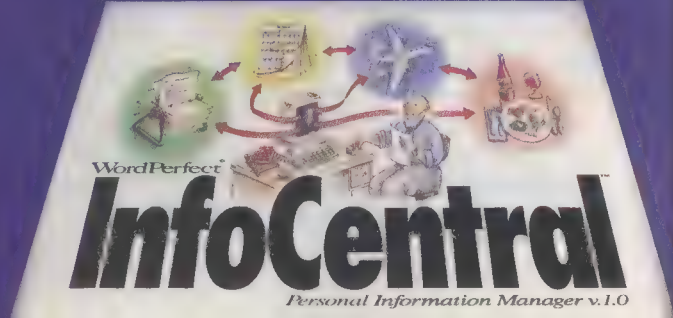

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Erector Set for Multimedia Apps

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PERFORMANCE: *Improvements are in usability, not speed.*
TECHNOLOGY: *Handles OLE, text retrieval, and color palettes like a pro.*
VERDICT: *A boon for application developers.*

Need to create industrial-strength multimedia applications, courseware, or front ends? Conventional wisdom says go with AimTech's industrial-strength (and expensive) IconAuthor or Macromedia's Authorware—or suffer through Asymetrix's tougher-to-use Multimedia ToolBook. The new choice: ToolBook 3.0, the product's first revision in two years and now a better choice for multimedia developers.

Multimedia ToolBook has always been flexible. But its interface and ease-of-access features have trailed the competition. Version 3.0 delivers the needed face-lift plus a bunch of ambitious new features that leapfrog those of competitive products. Priced at $895, it will undoubtedly change the balance of power in the authoring market.

Like a Book ToolBook is based on a book metaphor rather than IconAuthor's and Authorware's flowcharts. This metaphor divides the control structure into book and page backgrounds and foregrounds, augmented by canned objects from libraries and sample books. You can even call outside dynamic link libraries (DLLs) for the few functions unavailable in ToolBook's language, OpenScript. (But this level of functionality comes at an obvious price: Nonprogrammers need not apply.)

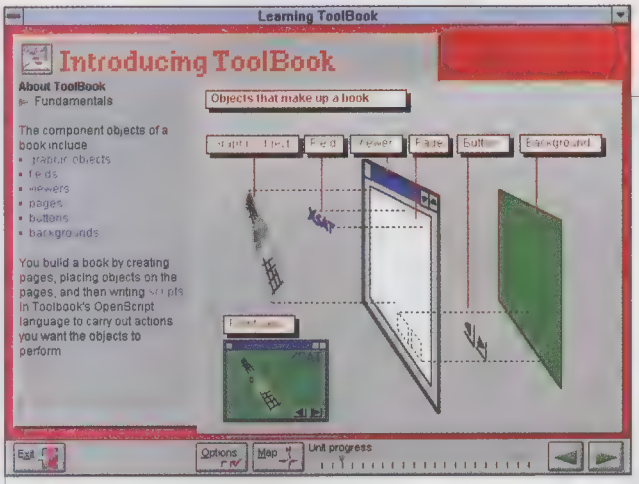
With comprehensive toolbars, new objects, and other enhancements, Version 3.0 enables you to build a book with almost zero scripting. Scriptless, path-based, or cell-based animation, drag-and-drop support, cute video transitions, and OLE support also pump up its usability. Unlike our experience with the previous release, incorporating video is as simple as drawing one box and selecting a file.

Similar new features dramatically reduce programming time and many of the frustrations associated with older ToolBook versions. In the past, it was easy to forget where you were supposed to edit a particular control (book, page background, or foreground). Now you simply click on the object and the script, and its association appears. Although modest and obvious, this simple change can save hours or days of debugging time over the course of a project.

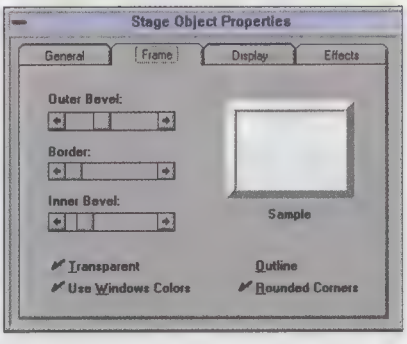
More and Better Then there's Digital Video Producer, a video editing utility similar to Adobe's Premiere. In fact, the only competitive factor not addressed in this version is the development metaphor: If you're wedded to icons and flowcharts, ToolBook is still probably not for you.

The new version also includes unique new features like automatic dithering, which eliminates palette flashing in 8-bit displays, CD-ROM optimization, a universal volume control, and Rich Text Format support. These features solve real programming problems and are currently unavailable in most competitive products.

In short, ToolBook 3.0 catches up and surpasses most competitors in features and functions while retaining its price advantage and royalty-free runtime arrangement. It's a must-buy for current ToolBook users. And at one-fifth the cost of traditional high-end tools, this new version should also lure developers from the competition. JAN OZER



New Metaphor: If you're a presentations builder or you work in flowchart-based multimedia development, Multimedia ToolBook's book-based metaphor doesn't come naturally. But once you've grasped it (and the tutorial really helps), it becomes a snap.



Staged Presentation: Multimedia ToolBook 3.0 contains a new Object called Stage Object to work with video, animation, and audio. Stage also controls window size, frame, and appearance through mouse controls rather than script commands—a big time-and-effort saver. It and the bundled video editor, Digital Video Producer, should make video handling especially easy. Also fixed in this version: AVI handling—it's now as easy as flipping channels on the TV.

FILEBOX

Multimedia ToolBook 3.0

Main Improvements: OLE support, a full text search-and-retrieval engine, drag-and-drop support, video support, scriptless animation, roll-your-own combo boxes.

Additional Utilities: Digital Video Producer, PalEdit, BitEdit, animation editor.

Runtime Royalty: None (competitors charge for runtime licenses).

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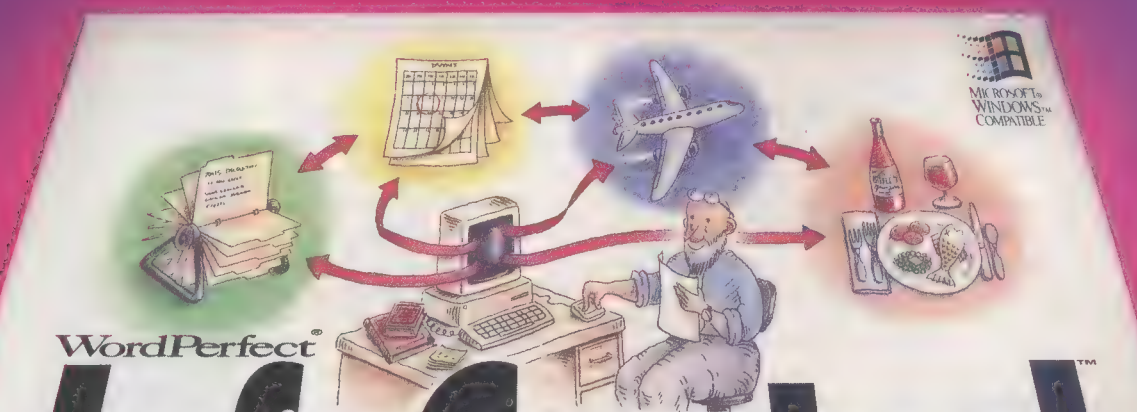

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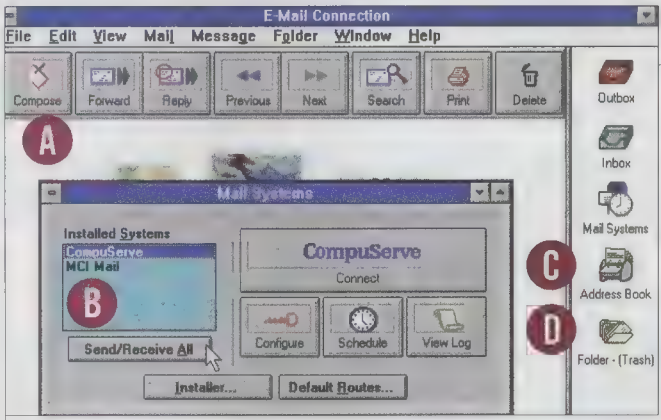
What about the Internet, America Online, GEnie, AT&T EasyLink, MobileComm, and automated faxing? E-Mail Connection links you to all those services and others using your choice of CompuServe, MCI, or Prodigy as gateways. Since the routing for these gateway services is built in, you just kiss all those confusing e-mail strings good-bye.

Inside Story E-Mail Connection isn't just for external e-mail services either. It provides a single interface for all your e-mail, including LAN-based e-mail like cc:Mail, Lotus Notes, and Microsoft Mail, or any package that uses Novell's MHS messaging protocol. That means you can send and receive messages on your company's internal e-mail system from E-Mail Connection, too. You can also send e-mail directly from mail-enabled applications, so the next time you're drafting a memo, you could send it to a colleague for comments without even leaving your word processor.

E-Mail Connection delivers on the largely unfulfilled promises of virtually every other e-mail front end that has come before it. You can save money by taking advantage of the options for offline message reading, composition, and replying. And you can schedule automatic message sending and retrieval to all supported online services and LAN-based e-mail.

Added Support Version 2.0 improves on the previous version by adding integral support for Prodigy, VIM (the messaging protocol for cc:Mail and Lotus Notes), 9,600-bit-per-second (bps) support for MCI Mail, 14,400-bps support for CompuServe and improved international access. Also new: the ability for one installation of the product to maintain databases and settings for multiple users with password protection, background uploads and downloads, and a long list of new destinations.

No other e-mail package comes close to the functionality and flexibility of E-Mail Connection 2.0. SWFTE's Wire provides similar services, but it offers a direct connection to only MCI. CompuServe's WinCim helps automate services on CompuServe only. There are no other packages that offer such complete integration with a wide range of online services. With this major new version, ConnectSoft has improved the usability of the product by reducing the number of mouse clicks it takes to complete many operations. If you juggle e-mail from two or more sources, this is a breakthrough product that automates the mail-management chores you put up with daily. Anyone who takes e-mail seriously should seriously consider E-Mail Connection 2.0. **SCOT FINNIE**



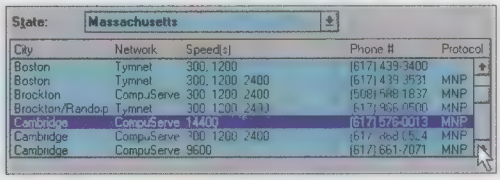
Get Connected: E-Mail Connection 2.0's new Window Bar places its tool icons in a convenient vertical bar, out of the way of the message area. The dialog boxes and toolbar functions have been streamlined for usability. But the real news is the new support for Prodigy, cc:Mail, and Lotus Notes. This program is, by far, the best e-mail integrator available.

A. Click and type! **Compose** takes you to the heart of your e-mail for creating your message.

B. Send and receive messages for all **installed services** in one fell swoop.

C. Within the **Address Book** you can automatically attach all addresses for incoming e-mails to your address list.

D. The **Folder** contains options for managing your e-mail messages.



E-Mail Anywhere: In addition to 14,400-bps support for CompuServe, E-Mail Connection 2.0's databases of online service numbers make it a snap to hook up from a hotel room in a strange city. Search for local numbers by area code or state, and click to select them.

FILEBOX

E-Mail Connection 2.0

System Requirements: 386 with 4MB of RAM (8MB recommended); 5MB of free hard disk space; a modem (for asynchronous services only); Windows 3.1; an account with CompuServe, MCI, or Prodigy for external e-mail; an e-mail package that supports MAPI, MHS, or VIM for LAN-based operation. If you're going to run Prodigy, you'll need Prodigy for Windows.

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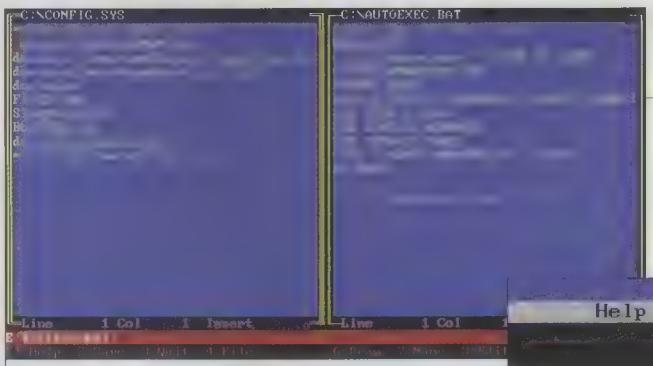
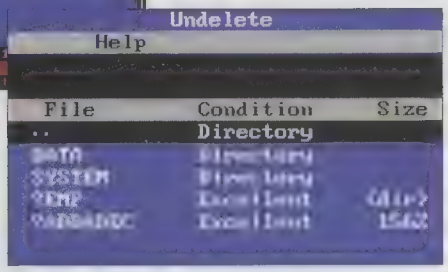
DOS and DOS: Separated at Birth

Remember *The Parent Trap*? That's the movie where Hayley Mills plays twin sisters who get split up between their parents, each of whom has sole custody of one child. Remember DOS? That's the operating system running most personal computers in the world, which now enjoys a similar custody arrangement, following the big IBM/Microsoft divorce. To make a long story short, Microsoft owns the even versions, IBM owns the odd ones. But it's the same DOS.

In the game of version leapfrog, IBM has just made the latest move by releasing PC DOS 6.3, which surpasses MS-DOS 6.2. It offers the same features available in Microsoft's release, and then some. For reasons beyond our comprehension, Big Blue hasn't been able to push this product to the forefront of PC operating systems. While MS-DOS is riding high, this lesser-known sibling is just a curious footnote on Egghead's shelves. It shouldn't be.



Interface Blues: The most interesting feature in PC DOS 6.3 is also its worst. The text editor (called E) edits and displays multiple files, and has usable features like Convert Case. But this horribly anachronistic program has no pull-down menus. To run a command, you must press Escape first, then type a cryptic command. It's well documented online, but you constantly need to press F1 to find a command or keystroke. WordStar users may be delighted to find some of the old familiar keystrokes. . . .



First-Aid Kit: The included Central Point Undelete is a true lifesaver, letting you undelete entire directories and their contents in a point-and-shoot fashion. You can even view the contents of deleted files in their native format before undeleting them. Too bad this file viewer is not available outside Undelete.

Squeeze to Fit Compression is PC DOS 6.3's greatest asset. After the Stac Electronics lawsuit forced Microsoft to pull DoubleSpace from MS-DOS 6.2, IBM's DOS looks more attractive than ever. IBM's SuperStor/DS offers effective, hassle-free compression. Like Stacker Anywhere, SuperStor/DS makes it possible to read a compressed disk on any computer, even when SuperStor is not running. It even includes password protection. And coming soon to PC DOS: the king of compression, Stacker itself. IBM has recently signed an agreement with Stac to bundle the more popular compression program with a future release.

Other new features in PC DOS 6.3 include a dynamic memory optimizer called RAMBoost that reconfigures your startup files whenever you make a change in your system. It works with multiconfig setups, optimizing each startup option separately. RAMBoost is only one of several Central Point and Symantec utilities included in this version; PC DOS 6.3 also includes a Central Point–licensed Undelete utility. The best news is that it's capable of undeleting directories (MS-DOS isn't). The Backup utility, another Central Point gem, offers enhanced support to numerous QIC and SCSI tape drives. Also included is Symantec's Defrag, which comes from its Norton Speed Disk utility.

PC DOS 6.3 matches many of the features that Microsoft introduced in MS-DOS 6.2: You get a very nice single-pass DISKCOPY, which saves you from having to swap disks continuously. Like MS-DOS, PC DOS has an optional interactive boot option, that lets you choose between a "clean boot" or an interactive step-through. And PC-DOS adds a file-overwrite warning to COPY, XCOPY, and MOVE.

Same Kernel Upgrading from MS-DOS 5.*x* or 6.*x* is a simple process. This is, after all, an identical twin. PC DOS 6.3 doesn't remove your existing \DOS directory files (unless they have identical names), so you can still use Microsoft's EDIT utility to upgrade if you prefer (IBM ships a less-capable editor with its DOS).

This is a decent DOS, and it has some very strong advantages. It's too bad that all the IBM divisions don't see it this way—IBM's own "clones," the Ambras, ship with MS-DOS. YAEL LI-RON

FILEBOX

PC DOS 6.3

System Requirements: For full installation on any x86 system: 512K of RAM minimum and 3MB of available hard disk space.

Key Utilities: Antivirus (detects over 2,000 viruses); Backup (supports 29 QIC and 20 SCSI tape drive models); and Program Scheduler, which automates DOS and Windows processes.

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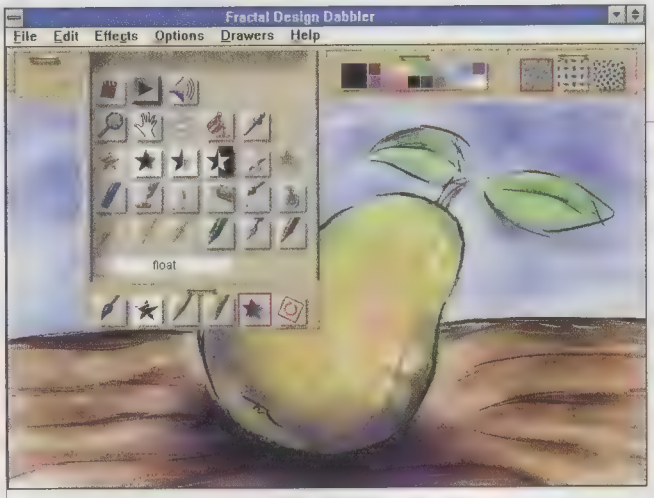
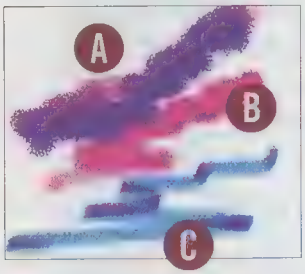
Do you doodle? Are the margins of your notepads adorned with tiny masterpieces? If so, then there's no question you'll want to check out Dabbler, a simple and seductive painting and drawing program from Fractal Design. Fashioned after the company's professional paint program, Fractal Design Painter, the $99 Dabbler lets budding artistes—or the merely curious—experiment with brushes, charcoals, paper textures, and other natural media to learn how to draw.

If you've ever held a crayon, you can draw with Dabbler. Its menus are clean and nearly wordless. Tools are stored in drawers (where else?) that open and close with an audible snap when you click on them. You also get the sound effects of drawing on paper, such as charcoal rasping lightly across the page—but you can turn this feature off if you prefer.



It's in the Drawer: Special effects and tools aren't labeled; beautifully crafted icons illustrate the effects that are available. Sample scraps of paper in another drawer let you select the surface texture and color you draw on—from canvas to watercolor paper.



Imitation of Life: Dabbler's drawing tools behave just as their traditional counterparts do on real paper. The chalk tool (A) leaves behind powdery marks that smudge when you rub them. Crayon (B) and pen marks (C) get darker as you apply additional layers. Fountain pens leave lines of varying width depending on the speed of your stroke.

Like the Real Thing Borrowing from Painter, Dabbler also has a great selection of special-effects tools. Wonder how famous artists might have interpreted your landscape? Simply click on the Impressionist or Seurat tools.

Want to turn your doodles into masterpieces? The opportunity is there for the taking. Included with Dabbler are several Walter Foster Publishing tutorials that teach the basics of traditional drawing. These tutorials aren't mere manual entries—you play them back from within the program to get a feel for how to translate theory into practice at your PC. For those who want more from Walter Foster, he's also responsible for the beautifully illustrated user's manual. And for those who don't know Walter Foster, his book (on which the manual is based), is a perennial favorite with art teachers and a best-seller in art supply stores. And if you want to critique your own technique, have an expert do it without looking over your shoulder as you work, or just plain show off, you can even record and play back your own brushstrokes.

Low Overhead Unlike professional drawing and painting programs such as Adobe's Illustrator, Corel's CorelDraw, or Fractal's specialized Painter, Dabbler doesn't require a lot of high-end hardware. It uses a dithered 16-bit color palette instead of 24-bit color, so image redraws are snappy—even on a 4MB Windows system. The only special requirement is a video card that supports 8-bit color (though 16-bit color looks much better). By contrast, most professional-level drawing programs require 16MB of RAM and a 24-bit graphics card, and set you back more than $400—more than four times what you can expect to pay for Dabbler. If you're confused by unfamiliar labels like emboss, invert, and air brush, you're in luck with Dabbler. Instead of words, the program uses icons to illustrate what its drawers of special-effects buttons do and it offers sample scraps of paper to select surface textures. Couldn't be easier.

As you may expect, Dabbler has some limitations. You can't create images larger than the size of the canvas onscreen. No matter. If you outgrow Dabbler, its images can be read and edited by the high-end Painter or exported to Adobe's Photoshop.

Not only is Fractal Design's $99 Dabbler one of the most inviting programs we've seen in many years, it's a great way to learn how to draw. Don't miss it. WENDY TAYLOR

FILEBOX

Dabbler

Minimum System Required: 386SX.

Minimum RAM Required: 4MB.

Monitor Required: 256-color (8-bit), extended VGA.

Pressure-Sensitive Tablets Supported: Wacom, Kurta, and CalComp.

Number of Drawing Tools: 54.

Number of Paper Textures: 20.

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Lynne - Graphic Designer :

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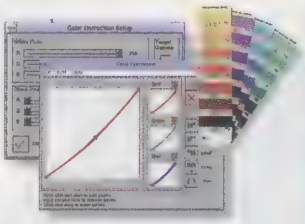

Precise color calibration

Doug - Power User :

"*Only ATI's GRAPHICS PRO TURBO met MY spec!* I wouldn't settle for less for my new Pentium computer. It is not just the *fastest Windows performer* overall: 42M Winmarks with 256 colors and 28M Winmarks in true color. It also comes *loaded with Windows features,* such as the ability to instantly switch color and resolution without leaving Windows, and FlexDesk+, an advanced software panel to control color, resolution, desktop and motion video acceleration. ATI's GRAPHICS PRO TURBO has a complete set of *drivers for all the other operating systems.*"

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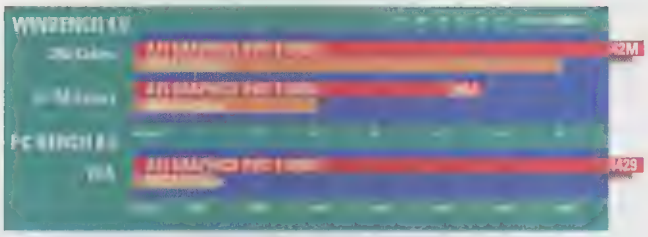

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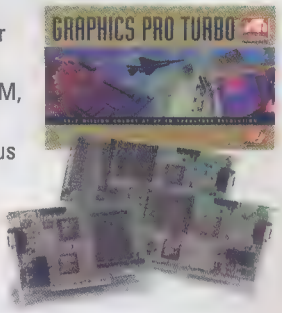

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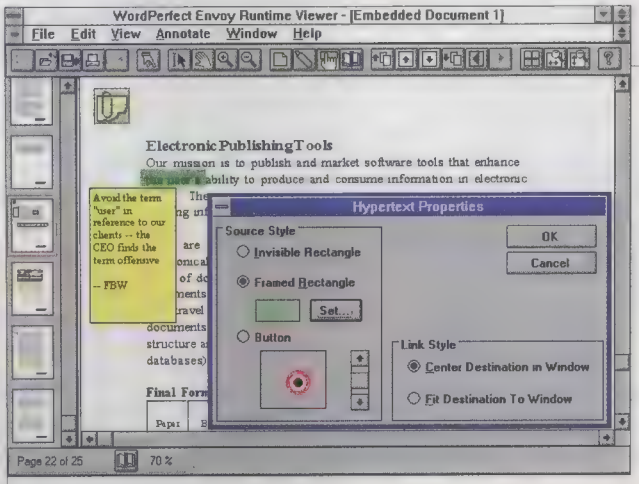
At $189, Envoy is not the price leader in that niche—Common Ground and Replica are both cheaper and they offer many of the same selling points. Envoy, like Common Ground and Replica, has modest system and disk requirements compared to the voluminous Adobe Acrobat 1.0. But unlike Acrobat, the runtime viewer can be distributed without restriction.



Hitting the Hot Spots: As a group-publishing tool, Envoy's a dream. You can make brief notes, add long hypertext links, and highlight text. Cut to the chase with the bookmark feature, or click on the thumbnails running along the left or top of your screen to beam straight to another page.

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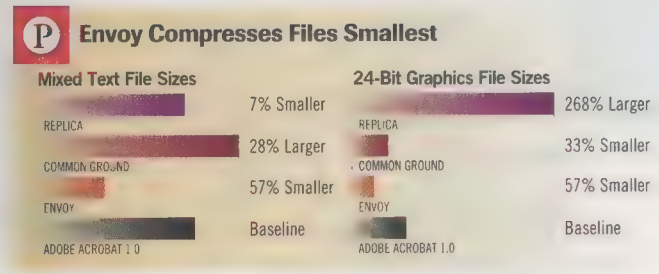

One Step Beyond To create an Envoy document, you print using a special driver—this is how all these electronic distribution products work. But Envoy's features go beyond those of Common Ground and Replica—and, in some cases, even the primo Acrobat. With Envoy, you can annotate documents using advanced tools—highlighter pens, embedded OLE objects, and yellow notes. Acrobat provides similar tools, but you'll have to outfit each pair of eyes reading your document with Acrobat's $50-per-user Reader. Even then, you won't get Envoy's unique highlighter pen or note properties, which identify who left what notes on the document.

Envoy offers a wealth of navigation tools, too. You can maneuver around the document by searching for text, jumping to pages by number, or clicking on thumbnails. For more precise movements (with a little work up front), you can add and jump to bookmarks or set up hypertext links.

Drag and Drop Racer Envoy has one feature you won't find in the competition: the variety of ways to create a portable file. When Envoy created files using a print driver in our tests, its driver was faster than any other we clocked, with one exception: Replica "printed" a multifont, multiple graphic compound document faster. But you can also import registered files from within the Envoy Viewer, or drag and drop files onto a minimized Viewer icon.

Despite its speed and features, Envoy does have some drawbacks. Unlike Acrobat or Common Ground, Envoy cannot give you output right out of the box from an application that contains EPS images, such as PageMaker. You'll need to add Zenographics' ZScript or another third-party PostScript interpreter to handle the EPS files. In addition, Envoy's pricier than Common Ground and Replica, so if you don't need fancy annotations or zoom levels, you just might be spending too much.

Should you buy? That depends. With the next rev of Adobe's Acrobat just around the corner, PostScript junkies may want to wait to comparison shop. But if you need faithful, well-compressed files to pass between PCs and Macs—along with annotation modes, but not PostScript interpretation—Envoy's the obvious choice of the current batch. MATTHEW J. LAKE

FILEBOX

Envoy

Main Competitors: Adobe's Acrobat, Farallon's Replica, No Hands' Common Ground.

Portable File Creation Techniques: Print driver, drag-and-drop, file import.

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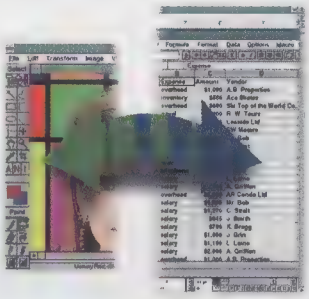

WinSwitch changes color and resolution without leaving Windows

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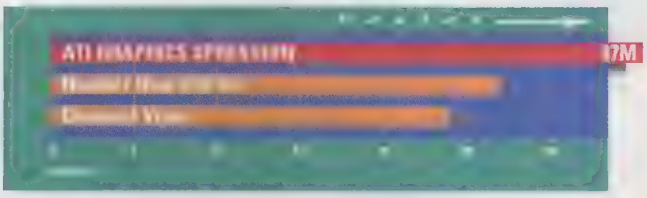

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Circle 113 on reader service card.

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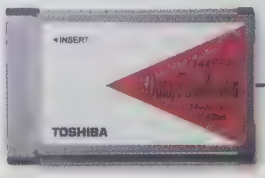

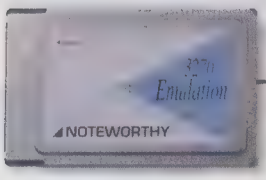

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Circle 215 on reader service card.

Ecco Reverberates in the Workgroup

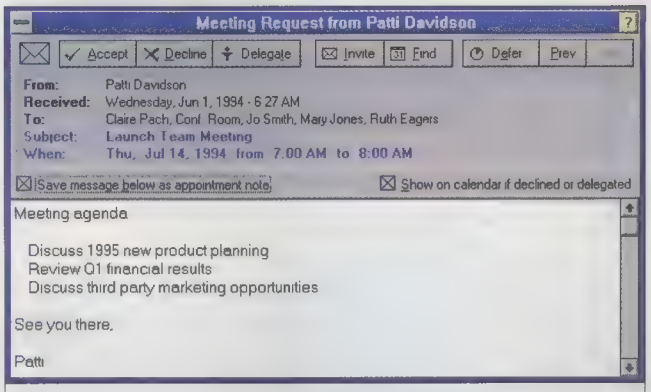
USABILITY: *Smooth once you learn the basics.*
PERFORMANCE: *A snappy performer on a 486.*
TECHNOLOGY: *File replication, e-mail compatibility.*
VERDICT: *A great PIM with superb workgroup features.*

Ecco has always been the black sheep of personal information managers (PIMs), an outline-based oddball in a flock of boring, Rolodex-like lambs.

Version 1.1 of Ecco was a fine single-user product. The new entry—Version 2.0—handles enterprise-wide scheduling using MAPI, CMC, VIM, Lotus Notes, MHS, and other mail programs. Not sure if everyone can meet on Wednesday? Ecco can help you find an available meeting time and room for the group.

The product integrates into your existing e-mail infrastructure nicely. The Meeting Mail feature lets you carry on a dialog with other e-mail users about meeting topics and agendas. Ecco Professional 2.0 will also act as an alternate interface to Microsoft's Schedule Plus.

Version 2.0 of Ecco allows for multiuser shared calendars, phone books, and outlines, and it lets you customize data with a host of access options for public and private views.



Meeting Madness: Ecco Professional 2.0 can schedule meetings over a variety of e-mail services. You can even attach Ecco outline notes, such as a meeting agenda, to your mail so that everyone will be prepared at meeting time. Not sure when everyone can meet? Let Ecco search and find out for you.

Another welcome change is the newly added file synchronization capability. This lets you set up master and replica files, and have changes made to the master file reflected in all the replicas (and vice versa)—perfect for those who want to make sure their home system is current with their office machine. You can synchronize files via e-mail, floppy disk, or LAN. Synchronization takes place at the data-field level so you won't be replicating a lot of old information.

Also new is a direct interface to Delrina's WinFax Pro, new and customizable phone book forms, and time/date stamps.

Ecco's standalone improvements with Version 2.0 aren't earth shattering. But the workgroup features of the new version elevate this product into a whole new realm. If you're looking for a capable workgroup information manager (a WIM?), give Ecco Professional 2.0 a look. JON PEPPER

FILEBOX

Ecco Professional 2.0

Requires: 386 processor, Windows 3.1, 4MB of RAM, at least 4MB of free hard-disk space.

Competitors: Polaris PackRat, Jensen-Jones Commence, and Lotus Organizer.

$279
$49.95 for competitive upgrade
Arabesque Software
(800) 457-4243
Reader Service No. 631

Visio Express for Microsoft Office

Shapeware's Suite Plug-In

USABILITY: *If you can use Office, you can use this.*
PERFORMANCE: *Weaker than Visio 2.0, but better integrated.*
TECHNOLOGY: *OLE 2.0.*
VERDICT: *Drag it into Office, drop it on your hard disk.*

Graphical tools have been the prima donnas of software for too long—they produce great results, but they're tough to work with. They're not team players. When you need a workaday program not too proud to work closely with the Microsoft Office suite, what you need is Shapeware's Visio Express for Microsoft Office.

Based on the stellar Visio 2.0 (reviewed in New! November 1993, page 81), Visio Express supports OLE 2.0, and its menu system and toolbars mimic those of Office. And Shapeware won't get slapped with a look-and-feel lawsuit, either. (In the coming months, Peachtree, Micrografx, and a couple dozen other companies will follow suit, each with Microsoft's blessing.) Because Visio Express operates inside Office applications, creating a flowchart or simple graphic while constructing a document is no harder than working within a PowerPoint or Excel dialog box.

Learning curve? There isn't one. Use Visio Express for the quick graphical hit—a flowchart here, a box there. It's ideal for the business user looking to spruce up that memo. Unfortunately, Visio Express is a pared-down version of its progenitor, Visio 2.0. It doesn't support multiple-page drawings and provides only 240 shapes—less than half of Visio 2.0's 600. But then, it costs significantly less: $79 to Visio 2.0's $129.

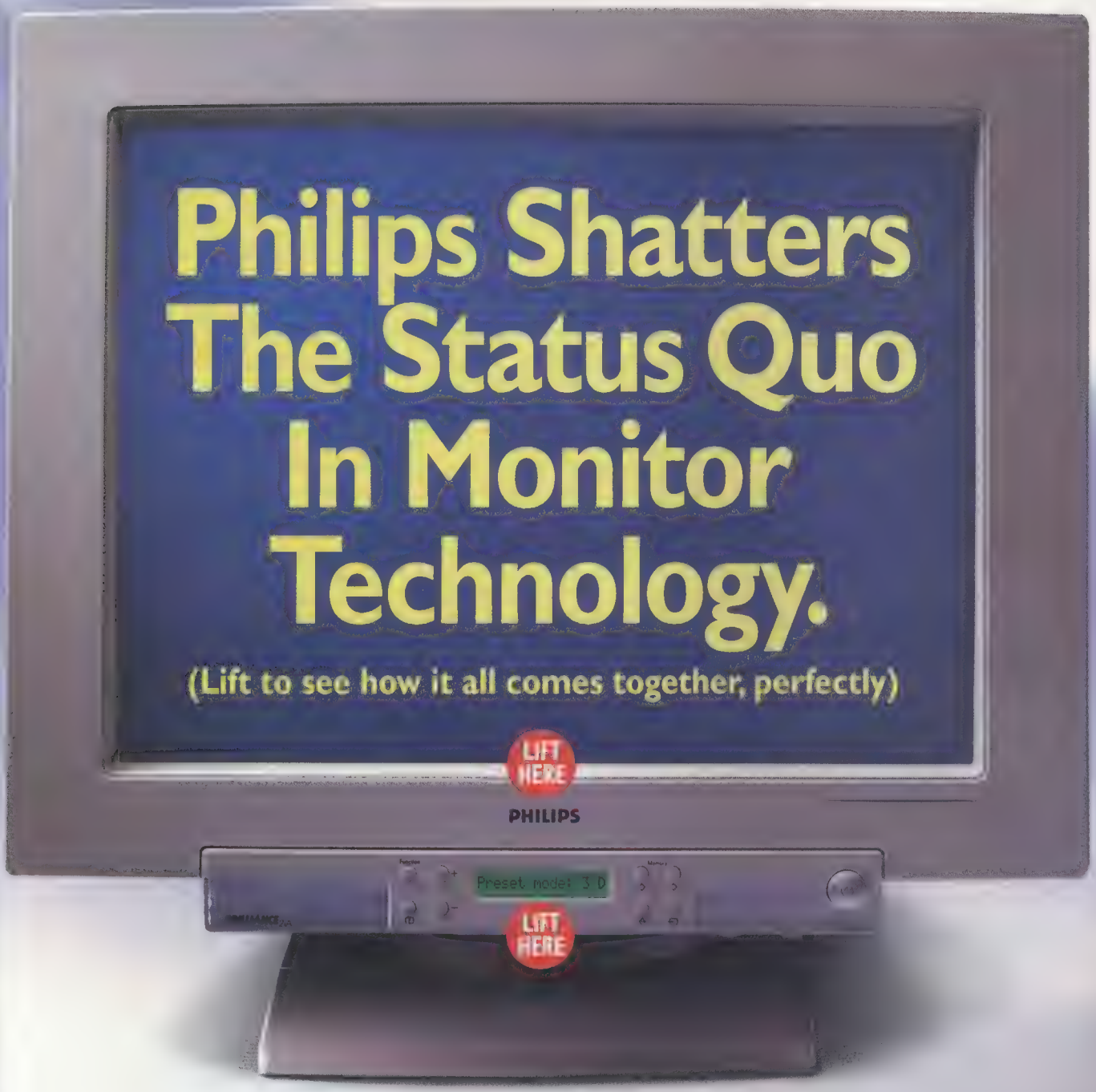
Visio Express for Microsoft Office is a great little graphical tool. ILAN GREENBERG

FILEBOX

Visio Express for Microsoft Office

System Requirements: 386 with 6MB of RAM.

$79
Shapeware Corp.
(800) 446-3335, (206) 521-4500
Reader Service No. 632



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Simply LANtastic

Trip the LAN Fantastic

When it comes to peer-to-peer networks, lighter is better. The best example of this is Artisoft's new low-end peer network, Simply LANtastic. Aimed at the growing number of small-office LANs, it is more than a hobbled version of Artisoft's powerful and popular LANtastic 5.0 peer-to-peer network package. (LANtastic 6.0, reviewed in New! June, page 89) is another creature entirely.)

Simply LANtastic is inexpensive. The $299 starter kit provides all the hardware and software you need to set up and run a two-node network. A single-node add-on pack lists for $149. Simply LANtastic also offers three security levels—full access, read-only, and no access. It also comes with a no-frills e-mail module for your basic messaging needs.

Easy Hardware The highlight of this entry-level system is that Artisoft has made installing the network hardware—usually the biggest stumbling block for novices—as easy as falling out of a tree. Instead of the unwieldy connectors that come with most Ethernet adapters, this card has two sockets for standard RCA ⅛-inch pin connectors, like the kind you find at Radio Shack. You plug the supplied cabling, which is pliable and thin, into either socket. Artisoft also plans to release a parallel-port version of the new adapter for notebook PCs.

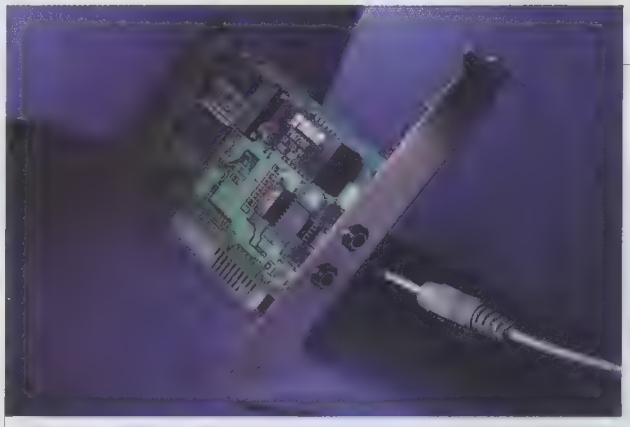
Once it's set up, Simply LANtastic is a breeze to use—its Windows controls are less complex than the average computer game, and even the DOS version is completely intuitive. And unlike Microsoft's Windows for Workgroups, Simply LANtastic lets you access the network from DOS or Windows, without having to manually load and unload drivers.

Despite its obvious strengths, Simply LANtastic falls short in software installation. It's easier to set up than other peer-to-peer networks, but Artisoft did not make installing software as easy as installing the hardware.

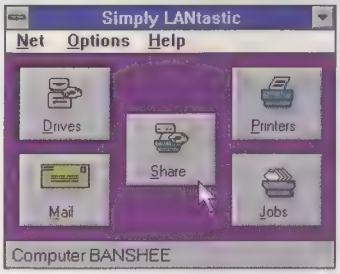
The installation routine walks you through the process of setting up network drive letters and connecting to shared printers. But it doesn't let you create names for devices you intend to share with others. Nor does it ask you which PC on the network should be the post office for e-mail. These omissions may confuse many first-time network installers.

Memory Hog Also missing are a few Windows features we've come to expect, such as context-sensitive help buttons on dialog boxes and right-mouse–button pop-up menus. Other drawbacks include copy protection, the inability to have separate workstation and user names, and a limit of eight characters in the names of shared-devices. Simply LANtastic's net drivers use none of your 640K of low memory, but they do hog 65K or more of high RAM.

Compared with Windows for Workgroups, Simply LANtastic has the advantage of not mucking up your Windows installation with a lot of extra stuff you might not need. It's also available with excellent hardware, and it provides seamless support for both DOS and Windows. And then there's the easy migration path to LANtastic 5.0. It almost lives up to its "Simply" name—only the software installation needs improvement. Still, we give it the nod. It's the easiest way there is to network two computers, and it won't cost you a fortune. SCOT FINNIE



Piece of Cake: Simply LANtastic's hardware is something else. It starts with a tiny new self-configuring, self-terminating 10-megabit-per-second Artisoft Ethernet card. There are no jumpers to set or cables to cut. Need more wiring? Pop down to the local Radio Shack and pick up some headphone cable. Simple.



Point and Click: Simply LANtastic's self-explanatory main control panel has five icon-activated buttons for sharing your devices, accessing drives, and so forth.

USABILITY: *Drag-and-drop connections to network servers and resources.*
PERFORMANCE: *Full Ethernet bandwidth on a shoestring.*
TECHNOLOGY: *Proprietary hardware eases installation.*
VERDICT: *It's the best bet for small offices, but there's room to grow.*

FILEBOX

SIMPLY LANTASTIC

Starter Kit: The $299 starter kit includes two self-configuring network adapters and cabling.

Upgrades: Options include a single-node add-on pack. You can add as many as 30 users on a Simply LANtastic network. The system can act as a client in a LANtastic 5.0 or NetWare network.

Security: Three levels of security include full access, read-only access, or no access to server resources.

$299 (two-node starter kit)
Artisoft
(800) 233-5564
Reader Service No. 641

PHOTOGRAPH BY GIAMPIERO BENVENUTI

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Circle 184 on reader service card.

A Reasonable Facsimile Thereof

Ah, the convenience of the fax machine. Trudging down the hallway, sorting through piles of faxes to find the one meant for you. Having sheets of curly paper turn brown on your desktop—or better yet, paying through the nose to put a fax modem on everyone's desktop. With technological luxuries like these, who needs hardships?

Fortunately, there is a better way to manage your workgroup's faxes: a fax server. It's fast, uses no paper, and everyone can share it in your office, just like a network printer. We haven't seen a better fax server than Castelle's FaxPress 1000. This nondescript gray box installs in minutes and comes with all the software you need to let DOS or Windows users send and receive faxes right from their desktops.

Twelve Minutes Worried about installing and maintaining a network device? Don't be. Our elapsed time from opening FaxPress's box to sending the first fax was 12 minutes—and we never even cracked the manual. Try that with an internal fax modem and its software.

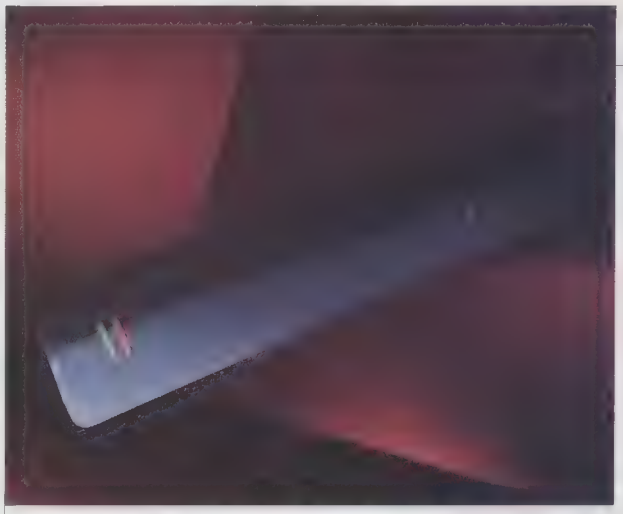
Maintaining FaxPress is also simple. Take the hardware, for example. The tiny box has four indicator lights to let you know how it's doing. Generally, we consider it better to have more status LEDs, but many fax servers go overboard, with 20 or 30 LEDs and cryptic abbreviations to go along with them. FaxPress keeps it simple: Green light means everything's OK, red light means something's the matter (consult the manual to see what the flashing light sequence means), and two other lights let you know when it's sending faxes or talking to the network.

The FaxPress management software is also easy to use in both Windows and DOS. An administrator can add FaxPress users (including personal telephone numbers and relevant information), look at and delete jobs in the queue, change priority settings, route faxes, and create cover pages. FaxPress also includes utilities to unload user information from a Novell NetWare server's bindery.

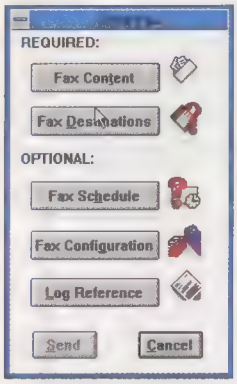
Cover Me The two most intriguing features of FaxPress are its cover page utilities and its automatic fax routing. You can create cover pages that include any kind of graphics and with any font installed on your system, and FaxPress will automatically fill in the To and From fields when the fax is sent.

The automatic fax routing feature, however, isn't quite as flexible. We had hoped for an OCR utility that would magically read incoming faxes and route them to the right user, but OCR technology still can't handle low-resolution faxes. FaxPress automatically routes faxes to individual users, but it does so by using identification numbers that the sender must dial on the keypad after FaxPress has picked up the phone.

The FaxPress 1000 is a rarity in our experience: a hassle-free network communication device. If your workgroup's fax setup could use some fine-tuning, this is the solution for you. JOHN MONTGOMERY



Read My Blips: Rather than burdening you with umpteen flickering lights with cryptic abbreviations, FaxPress keeps it simple. The tiny box has four indicator lights that let you know how it's doing. A green light means everything's OK, a red light shows a problem, and the manual tells you what flashing light sequences mean. Two other LEDs tell you when the unit is sending faxes or talking to the network.



On Schedule: The FaxPress comes with simple print redirectors for DOS and Windows. When you print from your application, you can just select the FaxPress like any other printer, and it will prompt you for an address, let you edit your cover page, and even schedule a time for the fax to be sent.

USABILITY: *Speedy installation, painless maintenance.*
PERFORMANCE: *Invisible. Zap your faxes and forget about them.*
TECHNOLOGY: *Doesn't read handwriting for automatic routing.*
VERDICT: *Saves time, money, paper, and aggravation. A winner for any office.*

FILEBOX

FAXPRESS 1000

Networks Supported: NetWare over Ethernet only.

Number of Phone Lines Supported: One.

Optional Module Prices: $295 for print server or MHS or cc:Mail gateways.

Big Brother Model: The FaxPress 2000 comes with one, two, or four phone lines, and supports both Ethernet and Token Ring NetWare and LAN Server networks. Prices start at $2,995 for the Ethernet version and $3,295 for Token Ring.

Competition: Other turnkey solutions include RightFax's eponymous OS/2-based fax server and OAZ Communications' NetFax, which is more limited in its e-mail and fax routing.

$1,995
Castelle
(800) 289-7555
Reader Service No. 642

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- ▲ 4MB RAM, Max: 20MB
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- ▲ System Status Panel
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- ▲ Includes AC Adapter and Slip Case

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- ▲ 85-Key Keyboard
- ▲ Centered 16mm Trackball
- ▲ Integrated Audio (speaker and microphone)
- ▲ System Status Panel
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- ▲ MS-DOS 6.2
- ▲ Windows for Workgroups 3.11
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- ▲ Centered 16mm Trackball
- ▲ Integrated Audio (speaker and microphone)
- ▲ System Status Panel
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- ▲ 4MB RAM, Max: 36MB
- ▲ 270MB IDE Hard Disk Drive
- ▲ 14" SVGA Color Monitor-LR
- ▲ VESA® Local Bus Graphics Accelerator 1MB
- ▲ VESA Local Bus IDE Hard Drive Controller
- ▲ 5 ISA Slots & 5 Drive Bays

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- ▲ 4MB RAM, Max: 36MB
- ▲ 270MB IDE Hard Disk Drive
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$1699 *Model D466DXA*
Business Lease: $62/month
- ▲ 128KB L2 Cache, Max: 256KB
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60MHz Intel Pentium, PCI
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- ▲ 8MB RAM, Max: 64MB
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- ▲ 540MB SCSI Hard Disk Drive
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- ▲ Integrated SCSI-2 Controller
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Business Lease: $69/month
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- ▲ 170MB Removable Hard Drive
- ▲ 4MB RAM, Max: 20MB
- ▲ 1 Type II PCMCIA Slot
- ▲ 86-Key Keyboard
- ▲ Integrated 16mm Trackball
- ▲ Suspend/Resume
- ▲ MS DOS 6.2, Windows 3.1
- ▲ Slip Case
- ▲ 4 pounds, including battery
- ▲ Monochrome models from $1299

486DX2/50MHz
$3599 *Notebook Model N450T-200*
Business Lease: $130/month
- ▲ 9.5" Active Matrix TFT Color Display
- ▲ 8MB RAM, Max: 12MB
- ▲ 200MB Hard Disk Drive
- ▲ 3.5" 1.44MB Diskette Drive
- ▲ 1 Type III PCMCIA Slot
- ▲ 86-Key Keyboard
- ▲ Integrated 16mm Trackball
- ▲ MS-DOS 6.2, Windows 3.1
- ▲ Carrying Case
- ▲ 6.6 pounds, including battery

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- ▲ 4MB RAM, Max: 12MB
- ▲ 120 MB Hard Disk Drive
- ▲ 3.5" 1.44MB Diskette Drive
- ▲ 1 PCMCIA Slot Type III
- ▲ 86-Key Keyboard
- ▲ Integrated 16mm Trackball
- ▲ MS DOS 6.2, Windows 3.1
- ▲ Carrying Case
- ▲ 6.6 pounds, including battery

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Road Warrior: $376
- ▲ PCMCIA 2.4/9.6 kbps Data/Fax Modem, Carrying Case
- ▲ Extra Battery, Battery Charger

Quick Dock: $404
- ▲ Port Replicator, Keyboard
- ▲ 14" SVGA Color Monitor

Notebook Accessories

Instant Office: $927
- ▲ Docking Station, Keyboard
- ▲ 15" FST-NI Color Monitor

Traveler: $278
- ▲ PCMCIA 2.4/9.6 kbps Data/Fax Modem, Extra Battery

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Untangling the World Wide Web

USABILITY: *Tough to set up dial-in access, but once you're online it's a breeze.*
PERFORMANCE: *Sluggish at 14.4 Kbps; reasonable over high-speed networks.*
TECHNOLOGY: *The next generation in online information access.*
VERDICT: *The best, least expensive way to access the Internet.*

Want a peek at the future of online communication? Then get yourself an Internet connection and a copy of NCSA Mosaic, a remarkable, free, online browsing tool. Developed by the University of Illinois's National Center for Supercomputing Applications this software tames the notoriously unruly Internet. Mosaic lets you tour the World Wide Web, a collection of information resources on the Net, as well as various other Internet resources such as Gopher and finger sites.

You can use Mosaic from an Internet-connected network, or from a dial-up connection to an Internet service provider. If you go the latter route, you'll have to find a provider that offers SLIP (Serial Line Internet Protocol) or PPP (Point-to-Point Protocol) connections, and you'll have to wrestle with complicated setup procedures. It's also available as part of several commercial Internet access products, including Spry's Internet-in-a-Box. You'll find that even at 14.4 kilobits per second (Kbps), Mosaic can be extremely slow.

When you finally get Mosaic up and running, it resembles nothing you've ever seen online. It's like browsing through an interactive multimedia magazine with endless depth and breadth. And the capability to upload and download both graphics and sound places Mosaic at the forefront of front ends.

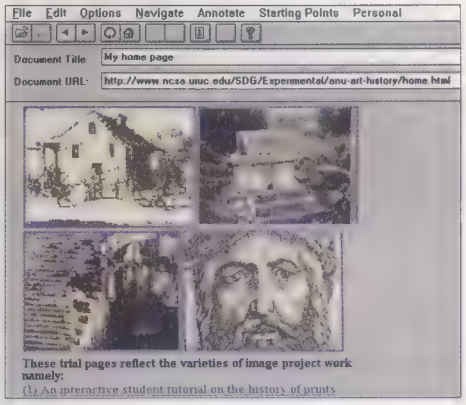
Mosaic Does the Seemingly Impossible: And it's free! Mosaic provides easy net navigation by using hypertext links, and it lets you view graphics and embedded sounds while you're online.

A. Mosaic's **toolbar** gives you instant access to a variety of navigational shortcuts.

B. Documents have plain-English titles, as well as specific **Internet addresses** that you can add to a "history" list. This helps you jump to them immediately.

C. Clicking on a series of **hot links** returns you to specific (in this example) GNN services.

D. Navigating the Internet is a point-and-click breeze for anyone, thanks to **Hypertext links** (noted by underline).



Publish or Perish: Create graphics-rich, online documents for Mosaic, and join the growing list of companies and individuals participating in an online, interactive, global magazine. But don't attempt this with a connection slower than 14.4 Kbps—graphics and sound files can slow your access to a snail's pace.

Limitless Research Mosaic guides you through an unparalleled reference library for limitless research. It will soon offer global electronic commerce through the CommerceNet, a new Internet marketplace debuting in August, which provides online catalogs, competitive bidding, and collaborative engineering and product data exchange.

Mosaic is most useful when perusing the Internet's World Wide Web, a global latticework of information interlinked via hypertext links. Here you'll find just about every piece of information imaginable, from the latest space-shuttle satellite photos to a comprehensive look at Australian marine bird-conservation projects.

To join the growing ranks of businesses that have a presence on the World Wide Web, you need a machine with an Internet connection and HyperText Transfer Protocol (HTTP) software. You also need to format all your information using the HyperText Markup Language (HTML). See the Filebox at right for more information about Mosaic.

If you don't mind a bit of direct dial-in setup trouble, and you have online patience, Mosaic can help you get the most out of the Internet's sights, sounds, and global e-mail capabilities. And, hey, the price is right. PRESTON GRALLA

FILEBOX

NCSA MOSAIC

To Publish on the Web: Unix-based HTTP software is available via FTP from NCSA and many other web sites. HTML Assistant, an HTML editor, is available via FTP from ftp.cs.dal.ca.

Free; a version is available as MOSAIC.ZIP from PC Contact's data library 3 (Utilities/Misc.). See page 228 for details.

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Circle 128 on reader service card.

Logbook LONG-TERM TESTS: TravelPro 5300 • Word 6.0 for Windows

AMS Has Horsepower—But Does It Travel?

It's not perfect, but our 66MHz 486 DX2, AMS's TravelPro 5300, never crashed or sassed us in six months of real-world use. On the plus side, there's the machine's gorgeous 9.5-inch active-matrix display and zippy processor. After working with the machine for a few hours, ordinary desktop monitors looked rather harsh and unfocused in comparison.

When I was in the office or at home, the machine was an all-around winner—fast, reliable, and comfortable.

The story changed when I took it on the road, however. The TravelPro 5300 has features few people need in a notebook (like two serial ports in addition to its built-in trackball), and each of them adds weight.

To make matters worse, the battery warning beeper would fire up after just about 40 minutes—not enough time to power you through the brief shuttle flight from San Francisco to Los Angeles. I felt more like I was using a small desktop computer with a built-in uninterruptible power supply (UPS) than a true portable. The machine's internal fan reinforced that.

Would I buy it again? If I needed a fast computer to lug between home and office, then I would. But as a true road warrior's computer, it's just not quite there. RAPHAEL NEEDLEMAN

TravelPro 5300 / AMS / (800) 886-2671 / (818) 814-8851 / $3,750
Circle No. 666 on Reader Service Card

Logbook Entries:

November 22,1993: *AMS's heavyweight color notebook enters our test fleet. I'm skeptical that this relatively unknown vendor can compete with the likes of Toshiba, Compaq, and IBM.*

December 1, 1993: *Turn it down! The internal fan sets up a racket when the CPU gets hot.*

February 3, 1994: *The low-mounted trackball skips if it gets a little dirty. AMS says new versions will have a more gunk-tolerant design.*

April 6, 1994: *Schlepping this nearly seven-pound machine around gives me Quasimodo-like posture. The NiCad battery powers the machine for only about an hour and a half. Newer batteries are supposed to last longer.*

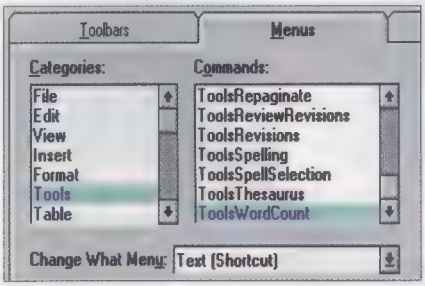
Logbook Entries:

October 10, 1993: *I hope good things come in big packages—Microsoft's Word 6.0 for Windows is a resource hog of a Windows program and walks with a huge footprint.*

November 3, 1993: *It's annoying that documents open at the zoom level in which they were saved.*

November 4, 1993: *A techno-whiz colleague writes me a zoom macro that takes care of the problem.*

February 1, 1994: *After months of doing word counts to make sure my stories fit in their allotted space, I decide that I should make that an option on my standard right-mouse menu (see screen above right).*



Word's Fat Footprints And Quick Fixes

I'm learning to take the bad with the good where Word 6.0 for Windows is concerned. Yes, it's a resource hog, but that's what you get if you want all these cool features. True, I encountered some problems I don't think I should have to live with, but the beauty of Word is that you can get it to do anything—if you're willing to put a little muscle into it.

Take my zoom problem: If a document was saved at higher than 90 percent, I can't see the entire width of my documents on my 14-inch monitor at 640 by 480. So I change my zoom level to 85 or 90 percent.

With my spiffy zoom macro, now I see every single document I open—no matter what its source—at 85 percent. But I wish that Word made it easier to write macros.

Adding the word count command to my right-mouse button was a snap. But when I select a few paragraphs of text to get a word count, the right-mouse word count command counts my entire document. Thank goodness for quick fixes. The interim Version 6.0a release, which also addresses some speed problems, fixed my word count problem, too. Now everything works just as it should.

Despite its warts, over the long haul, Word 6.0 has proven itself. It's got features I'll never again be able to live without—AutoCorrect, customizable right-mouse menus, and unlimited undo, to name just a few. And I can fine-tune my shortcuts to make the drudgework of editing fly by. KYLA K. CARLSON

Word 6.0 for Windows / Microsoft Corp. / (800) 426-9400 / (206) 882-8080 / $495
Circle No. 667 on Reader Service Card

PHOTOGRAPH BY GIAMPIERO BENEVENUTI

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Disk•Stor 420 MB 3.5-inch Internal Hard Disk Drive Kit

Capacity Chart

Disk•Stor Model	Capacity
DS210A	213 MB
DS420A	426 MB
DS540A	541 MB
DS810A	810 MB
DS1080A	1080 MB

Retail Outlets: Best-Buy, CompUSA, Computer City, MicroCenter, Walmart **Catalog Merchandisers:** CrutchField, Global, Inmac, Micro Warehouse

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Introducing the Tape•Stor™ family of tape drives from Conner. Tape backup systems that are as easy on your wallet as they are to use. Whether you need cost-effective data protection for a stand-alone PC or an entire corporate network with hundreds of users, Tape•Stor provides reliable tape backup in capacities from 250 MB to 48 GB.* What's more, Conner delivers these systems in your choice of DAT, minicartridge, and data cartridge formats.

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Tape•Stor 250 MB Internal Tape Backup System

Capacity Chart

Tape•Stor Model	Compressed Capacity
Minicartridge	
C250MQ	250 MB
4mm DAT	
C4320R	2.0 GB
TSD4000H-SSE	4.0 GB
DAT Autoloader	
C4584NP	16 GB/48 GB*
TSL16000-Net	16 GB/48 GB*
Data Cartridge	**Native Capacity**
C2150S	250 MB
C2525S	525 MB

CONNER®
The Storage Answer.

* 48 GB when used with an optional 12 cassette magazine. ** Tape•Stor data cartridge tape drives are backed by a one-year warranty.

Circle 173 on reader service card.

Life Begins At 100MHz

SYNOPSIS

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FINAL ANALYSIS: PC Computing's *Decision Maker.* **136**

Ah, the seduction of power. It starts at 75MHz and thrives at 100MHz and beyond. It performs complex database searches faster than you can spin a dime across a coffee table, and it renders high-resolution 24-bit images faster than you can doodle on a cocktail napkin. It delivers a magnitude of PC performance you have never known. And once you've had this much power in your grasp, you'll never want to settle for less.

The 66MHz speed limit that has lorded over the PC for nearly two years has finally been smashed—not by one CPU, but by more than a half-dozen. It points to a fundamental change in the industry, in the ways that PCs will be designed, bought, and used.

Intel's Pentium, the various clock triplers from IBM and Intel, and the PowerPC from Apple, IBM, and Motorola each bring a different range of capabilities to today's business applications. All remain compatible—albeit tenuously, in some cases—with the *x*86 architecture. Otherwise, their only common hallmark is uncompromised, barn-burning performance.

What Pentium Brings to the Party There's no better view of the transformation than from the top. Dell Computer's Dimension XPS P90, powered by Intel's new 90MHz Pentium, decisively soared past every other system we tested in *x*86 applications. But the Pentium really shines when juggling multiple applications. Run a video clip in a window or download files in the background and it won't bring your other programs to their knees—there's enough Pentium CPU muscle to go around.

The Dimension XPS P90 runs neck-and-neck with Apple's 80MHz Power Macintosh 8100/80 AV in both integer and floating-point calculations. Much of the Pentium's capabilities—dual instruction pipelines and floating-point math, in particular—will be realized when native applications arrive.

No matter: Nothing beats the Dimension XPS P90 for running

BY MARTY JEROME

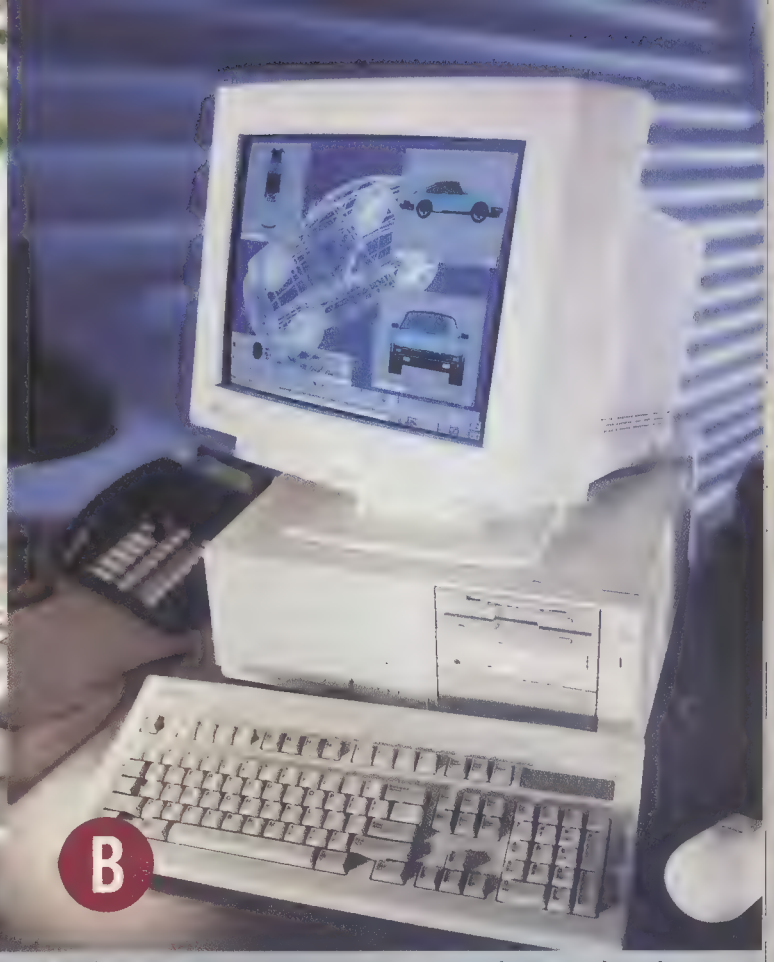
A VIRTUOSO: The 80MHz PowerPC 601 chip is a graphics wizard in Power Macs, although it runs Windows only in standard mode.

B RAW SPEED: Intel's 90MHz Pentium is the fastest way to run *x*86-based business applications of all kinds.

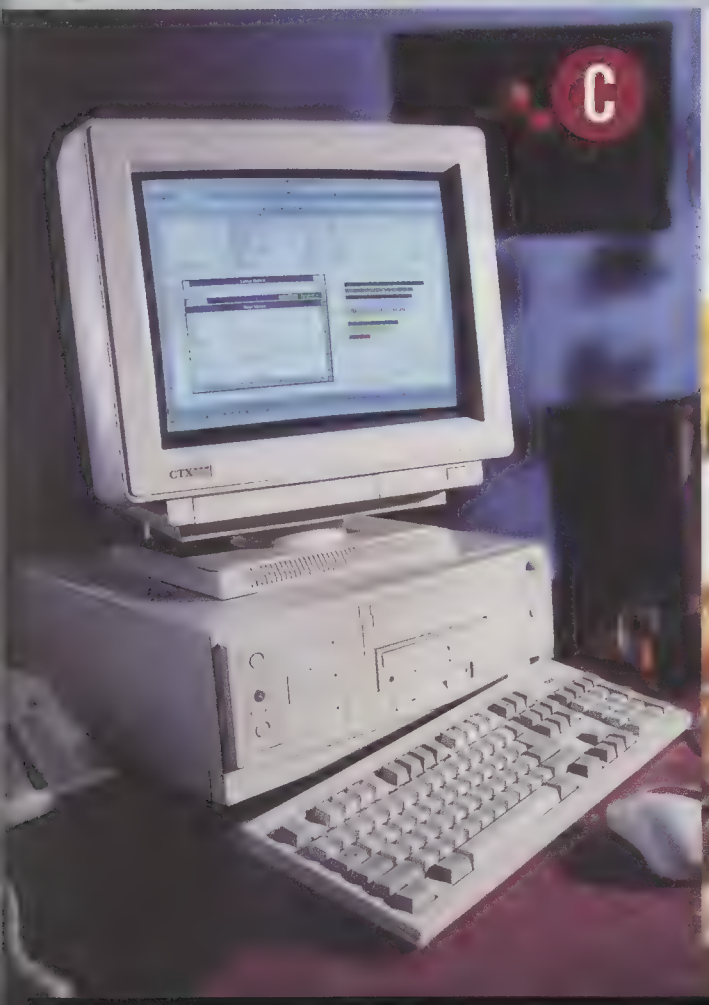
C NEW RULES: Clock-tripled 100MHz 486DX4 systems will quickly replace 66MHz 486DX2s as the desktop standard.

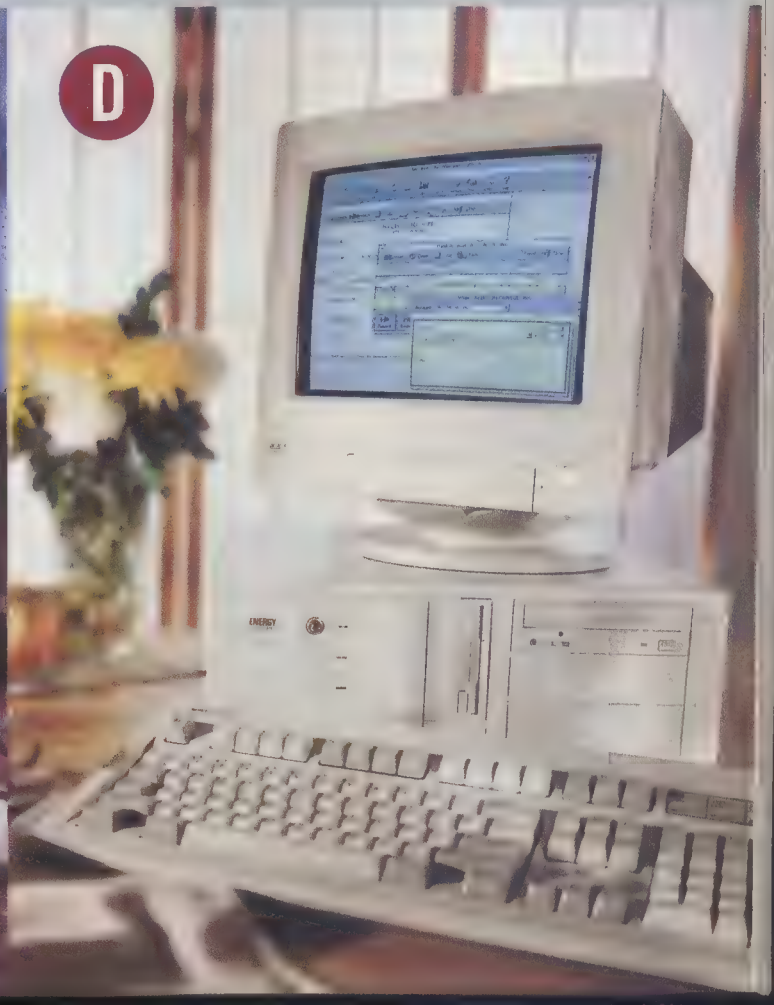
D LOW HIGH-END: 75MHz Blue Lightning 486 chips are cheaper than DX4s—but their performance lags.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROBIN GINSBERG



Beyond 66MHz: 80MHz, 90MHz, and 100MHz systems set new speed standards.





Future Watch: Tomorrow's Chips

the programs installed on your hard drive. It provides the perfect upgrade path for users who are squarely grounded in Windows and *x*86 applications and also need to run CAD or engineering programs, workgroup applications, and large-scale financial analysis systems.

Mac PowerPC Challenging the 90MHz Pentium is the PowerPC, which debuted with fanfare in March (see "The PowerPC Revolution," February, page 129). The attention was well deserved: The PowerPC-based Macintosh is a true RISC PC capable of running both Macintosh and Windows applications. Our tests of the first 80MHz Power Macintosh 8100/80 AV confirmed our early enthusiasm. Performance in native graphics applications such as Aldus's PageMaker and FreeHand and Adobe's Photoshop wailed.

Windows, however, runs only in emulation through Insignia Solutions' SoftWindows, and only in standard mode. The Power Mac lagged well behind Dell's 90MHz Pentium and all of the clock-tripled systems we tested in Windows applications. Insignia plans to introduce a 486 version of its emulation package this fall.

486 Times Three Many users will prefer the safe haven of the 486 architecture, knowing that the current crop of clock triplers allows them to put the pedal to the floor. The clock-tripled Intel DX4 was a natural follow-up to the 486DX2. Fully pin-compatible with the 486 CPU, it allows manufacturers to squeeze as much as 60 percent more performance from existing motherboards. Currently available in 75MHz, 83MHz (the clock runs at 2.5 times its external speed), and 100MHz versions, the DX4 will appear in everything from notebooks to servers, thanks to its 3.3-volt, low-heat design. In fact, we expect it to put the DX2 out to pasture. Why? More bang for the buck. Zeos International's Pantera DX4-100 particularly impressed us. It was the second fastest of the DX4s we tested, yet costs only $3,195 fully loaded. All of the DX4s push today's applications and multimedia to the max.

Only Alaris's Cougar EnergySmartPC BL3X/75 lagged behind in our tests. Powered by a 75MHz Blue Lightning CPU from IBM, its performance trailed a 66MHz 486DX2 Compaq system. Like Intel's DX4, the Blue Lightning comes with a 16K cache, but doesn't have a floating-point unit, which the DX4 does. Also, it uses a 386 bus interface. The Blue Lightning-2, which is reportedly scheduled to debut this fall, will come with a 486 interface that should boost performance by up to 20 percent. It, too, will seduce you with power.

Technical Forecast: Desktop Crays

1. Feeling the heat from the PowerPC, **Intel's P6** will debut in 1995—a year ahead of schedule.
2. Motorola has other plans. Its **PowerPC 604** will offer twice the performance of the 601.
3. NexGen's **Pentium clone,** the Nx586, means lower prices on Pentium-class PCs for everyone.

First, the bad news: A flurry of new CPUs will make PC purchases even more confusing in the months ahead. The good news? The price of power will continue to plummet.

Intel P6 In late 1995, Intel plans to upstage its 90MHz and 100MHz Pentium CPUs with a chip code-named the P6. Six million transistors will crowd its wafer, capable of 250 million instructions per second—which gives you the power of your everyday ES/9000 mainframe computer and runs about 60 percent faster than current Pentiums. Look for the P6 to run at clock speeds of 150MHz or higher.

Motorola PowerPC 604 Meanwhile, Motorola's PowerPC 604, which is due at the end of this year, will succeed the 601, the brains behind today's Power Macs. It will deliver roughly twice the performance of current Pentiums and will arrive nearly a year before the P6. The PowerPC 620, due late in 1995, will double the performance yet again.

Newcomers Competitors are also on to the Pentium. Advanced Micro Devices' code-named K5 and Cyrix's code-named M1 chips will offer advanced superscalar 64-bit designs that run unrecompiled 486 code faster than today's 90MHz Pentiums. The 100MHz M1—due this year—is a 64-bit CPU with unique pipeline management and 32 internal registers that should deliver Pentium power to *x*86 applications. Because it uses a slow bus interface, however, its performance will lag behind today's 90MHz and 100MHz Pentiums. Both AMD and Cyrix also have 80MHz 486-class chips in the works, chips which should drive prices on Intel's 486s to unprecedented lows. Finally, NexGen's Nx586, a Pentium clone, is a two-chip CPU that runs at 60MHz and 66MHz. Priced well below Intel's chips, it's already exerting tremendous downward pressure on prices of Pentium-class systems. This, of course, is the best news of all.

CPUs THE NEXT GENERATION

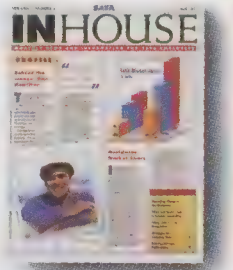
CHIP	Date Expected in Systems
AMD Am486DX-80	Third Quarter 1994
AMD K5	Third Quarter 1995
Cyrix CX486DX2/80	Third Quarter 1994
Cyrix M1	Fourth Quarter 1994
Intel P6	Late 1995
Motorola PowerPC 604	Fourth Quarter 1994
Motorola PowerPC 620	Fourth Quarter 1995
NexGen Nx586	Third Quarter 1994

Science has found a cure for snoring. At least during your presentation.

PCC Best
PC Computing
BEST 200
June 1994
Tektronix Phaser 220i

It's the new Phaser™ 220 color printer by Tektronix®. It's affordable. It's easy to use. And it's the best way to keep people awake without the use of costly stimulants. How? Quite simply, amazing color. The Phaser 220's SuperCell 600™ technology allows you to print a whopping 600 x 300 dots-per-inch. And in lay terms, that's a lotta dots. And a lotta dots means your annual reports will yodel, your pie charts will do backflips and your bar graphs will announce their presence with authority. Plus you get all this great color at two pages per minute on most common laser papers. At this speed, it should come with an airbag. The Phaser 220 also offers true Adobe® PostScript™ Level 2 and supports PCs, Macs, workstations and just about every network interconnect. Add to this the fact that it's reliable, has multiple paper trays and a huge print capacity and you've got yourself one tough workhorse. For a free Phaser 220 print sample or the name of your nearest Tektronix dealer, call **800-835-6100**, department 34D. For faxed information, call 503-682-7450, and ask for document #5003. But don't wait too long. Because business is getting more and more competitive. And if you snooze, you lose.

Overheads



Desktop Publishing

Reports

The Phaser 200 series starts at a suggested retail price of only $2,995. Who says money can't buy happiness?

Tektronix

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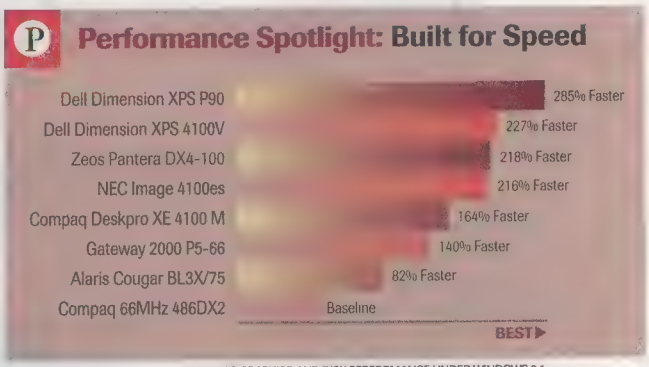
Circle 121 on reader service card.

The **Hard** Numbers

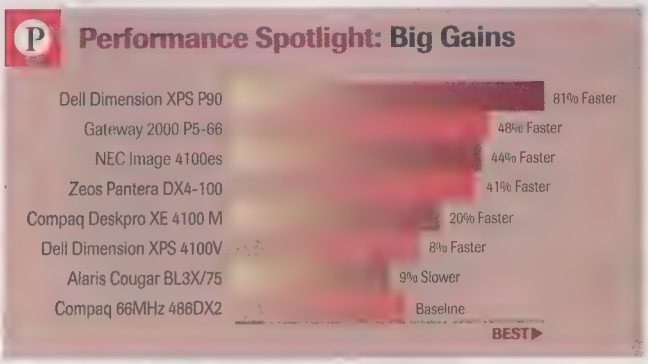
Hit PageMaker's search-and-replace command on a 90MHz Pentium and watch in **numb disbelief** as it executes. And when it recalculates an Excel spreadsheet, you half expect to smell a **burning clutch**. As *PC Computing* Labs tests confirm, there's no beating the Pentium for Windows applications, although the Power Macintosh 8100/80 AV runs on par with it when executing native Mac programs. Even the **dollar-saving** DX4s provide a level of performance that a 66MHz 486DX2 can't touch. IBM's 75MHz Blue Lightning was less impressive than the DX4, due in large part to the chip's lack of an onboard floating-point unit.

Who needs all this horsepower? If you plan to stick with Windows 3.1 and the 16-bit applications already on your hard drive for the next two years, DX4 systems offer first-rate power at bargain-basement prices. Although their overall performance is slower than Pentiums, you won't notice the difference with most mainstream applications, such as spreadsheets and word processing programs. Zeos's Pantera DX4-100 proved particularly impressive; it turned in high benchmark scores yet wore the lowest price tag of the bunch: $3,195. The other three DX4s—Compaq's Deskpro XE 4100 M 525/w, Dell's Dimension XPS 4100V, and NEC's Image 4100es—are no slouches, either.

Winstone Wonders As the broadest measure of performance in Windows applications, the Winstone benchmark (see "Performance Spotlight: Big Gains," below) confirmed our hunch that DX4-based systems would perform somewhere between a 66MHz 486DX2 (Compaq's ProLinea MT CDS) and a 66MHz Pentium (Gateway 2000's P5-66). Honors go to NEC's Image 4100es and Zeos's Pantera DX4-100 as the fastest DX4s.



NOTE: WINBENCH IS DESIGNED TO MEASURE GRAPHICS AND DISK PERFORMANCE UNDER WINDOWS 3.1.



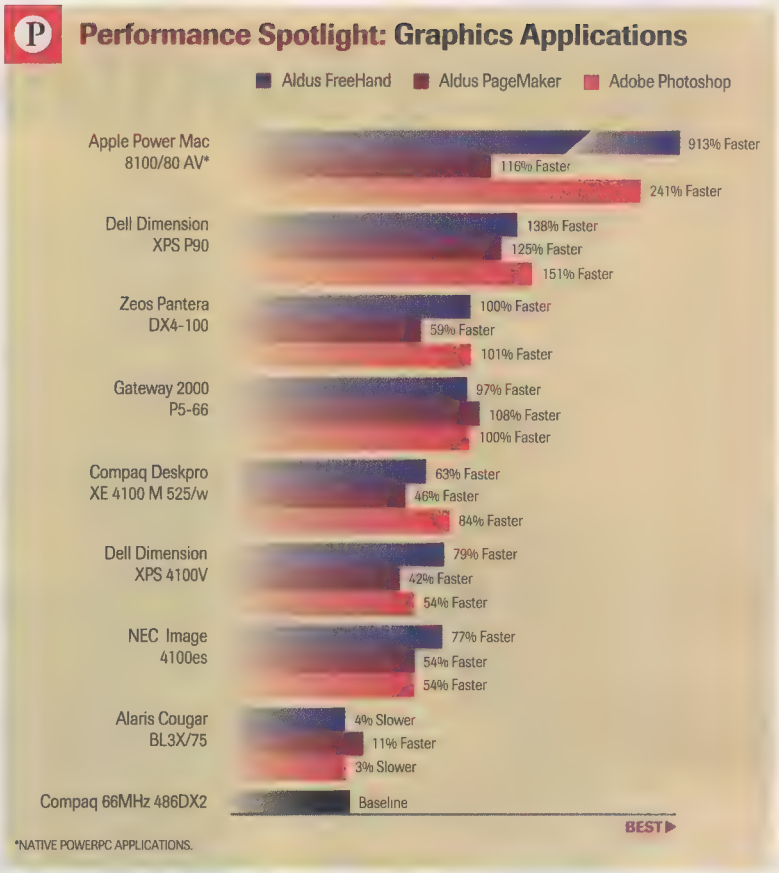
NOTE: THE WINSTONE BENCHMARK RUNS 12 POPULAR WINDOWS BUSINESS APPLICATIONS

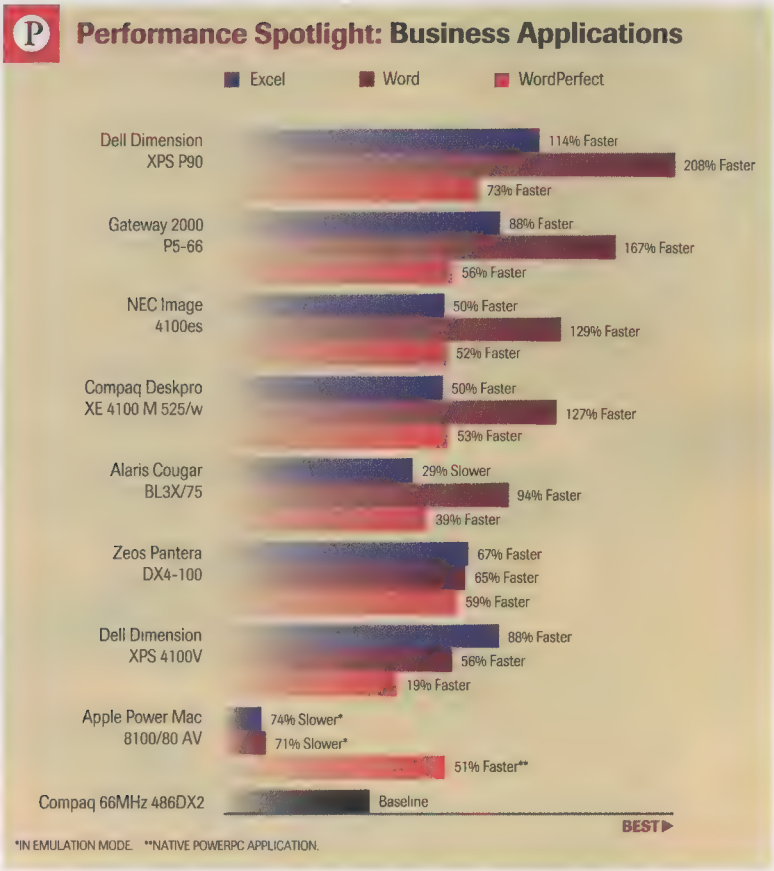
The Pentium should also be a boon for voice and handwriting recognition, 3-D modeling, and high-throughput servers, thanks to its superbly implemented dual-processor mode. Likewise, we expect Pentiums to run 32-bit code—including that in the next version of Windows—much more efficiently than 486s will.

Raw Numbers A rudimentary measure of system performance at Windows-intensive tasks, Winbench turned up a surprise: Dell's Dimension XPS 4100V, an otherwise middling DX4, turned in the second fastest time thanks to its Diamond Viper video card (see "Performance Spotlight: Built for Speed," above). Even so, it's no match for its Pentium-class big brother, the Dimension XPS P90.

What of Apple's PowerPC-based Power Macintosh systems? Current Macintosh users have every reason to upgrade, especially power users who have ventured into the realm of workstation-class applications. Most Windows PC users, however, will do better to adopt a wait-and-see attitude toward the PowerPC—at least until more software developers announce plans to recompile their applications for the new chip.

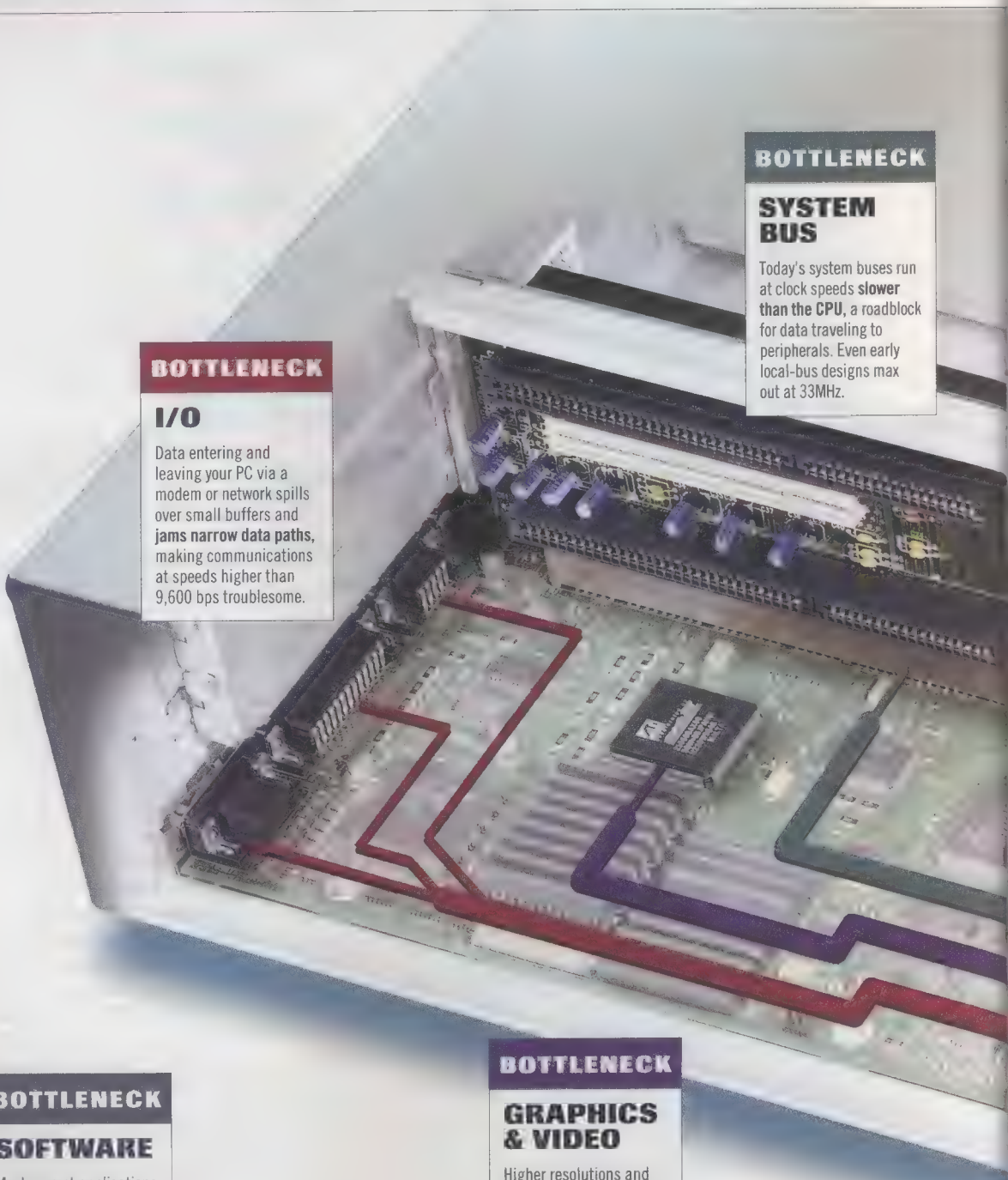
The RISC Advantage: Line up Dell's Pentium Dimension XPS P90 against the Power Macintosh 8100/80 AV, have each run native graphics applications, and the PowerPC RISC chip's advantage becomes clear. Despite a relatively slow video subsystem (although it's a vast improvement over the video on the current 68040-based Macintosh Quadra), the Power Mac hauls. It's an excellent graphics workstation for current Mac users. But until more *x*86 applications are recompiled for it, the Dimension XPS P90 is the fastest machine you can buy for intensive graphics chores—as much as 151 percent faster than a 66MHz Pentium. Even the DX4s—especially Zeos's Pantera DX4-100—offer a substantial performance edge over current 66MHz 486DX2 systems.





The Pentium Advantage: The performance penalty you'll pay for the Power Macintosh's emulation mode gives good reason to pause before springing for one. IBM has plans to introduce an on-chip emulator with the PowerPC it introduces in 1995, which should boost emulation performance considerably. Meanwhile, you'll want to run business applications in native mode—regardless of the system you buy. The Pentium's muscle gives a noticeable but hardly dramatic performance edge over DX4s in word processing and spreadsheet tasks. The money saved by buying a clock tripler may be well worth the slight performance trade-off.

Shattering **Bottlenecks**



BOTTLENECK

SYSTEM BUS

Today's system buses run at clock speeds **slower than the CPU,** a roadblock for data traveling to peripherals. Even early local-bus designs max out at 33MHz.

BOTTLENECK

I/O

Data entering and leaving your PC via a modem or network spills over small buffers and **jams narrow data paths,** making communications at speeds higher than 9,600 bps troublesome.

BOTTLENECK

SOFTWARE

Most current applications use **16-bit code**—which hardly avails today's 64-bit feature of Pentium and RISC processors. Inefficient code also overloads the system.

BOTTLENECK

GRAPHICS & VIDEO

Higher resolutions and **24-bit color** mean more data to push around on your monitor. Full-motion video also steals CPU time.

Bottleneck	Solution
CPU	Look for continued—and increased—use of **coprocessors** to offload floating-point math, video, serial communications, and other chores from the CPU. Large (512K or more) level-2 caches are also appearing.
GRAPHICS & VIDEO	The 64-bit graphics accelerators that offload graphics tasks from the CPU have already arrived; expect their prices to drop. **Dual-ported VRAM** is also standard equipment. New on the scene: integrated video coprocessors.
I/O	Local-bus network cards abound, although **Fast Ethernet**—with ten times the throughput of traditional Ethernet—owns the future. Coprocessed I/O ports are a near-term solution.
MEMORY	Asynchronous dynamic RAM chips can't keep up with high clock speeds and the Pentium's 64-bit design. Among the possibilities for the future: **cached DRAM** and enhanced DRAM chips that broaden the memory-to-CPU bandwidth.
SOFTWARE	Software publishers aren't rushing to recompile applications for the Pentium and the PowerPC. Today's CPUs depend on **true 32-bit code** for full performance. Look for more 32-bit applications—including the next version of Windows—to arrive in 1995.
STORAGE	Hard drives continue to get more efficient. And now that the 528MB limit on IDE hard drives is history—thanks to **enhanced IDE**—fussy SCSI drives aren't the only high-performance option.
SYSTEM BUS	New versions of PCI and VL-Bus bump **local-bus** speeds to 50MHz and beyond (up from a maximum of 33MHz) across a 64-bit data path (up from 32 bits). High-speed 64-bit peripherals will follow.

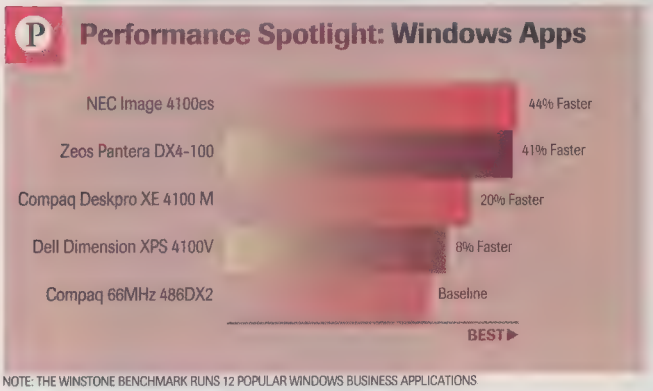
100MHz DX4s: Compaq, Dell, NEC, Zeos

Clock-Tripled 486s

Take a tip on Intel's new DX4 CPU: Ignore the technical hype; look at the prices. Spanking-new systems start at less than $3,000 and deliver all of the performance that most of today's 16-bit business applications require. Loaded to the gills, Zeos's Pantera DX4-100 costs only slightly more than that. We remind you that these are first-generation DX4 PCs. Think about where those prices will hover three months from now given today's escalating chip wars. True, 90MHz Pentium systems like Dell's Dimension XPS P90 offer better performance when they're running multiple applications or being used for sophisticated processing (CAD, desktop publishing, graphic design, financial modeling, etc.), but DX4 systems offer the right balance of price and performance for mainstream spreadsheet, word processing, and network applications that are today's mainstay business programs.

For the money, you get PC performance that will make the 66MHz 486DX2 on your desk feel like a vintage IBM AT. In many ways, the 100MHz DX4 is the flagship of the 486 family of CPUs. Its 0.6-micron, 3.3-volt fabrication keeps heat down and energy conservation up. It features Intel's canny SL technology, which allows any system that uses the CPU to be Energy Star–compliant (90MHz Pentiums won't meet these standards until the end of the year). Already, a generation of 75MHz DX4 notebooks are thundering to market. The DX4 chip's built-in floating-point math chip and 16K cache—up from the original 486DX's 8K cache—maximize performance.

Our tests certainly concur. NEC's Image 4100es performed nearly as fast as Gateway 2000's P5-66 66MHz Pentium system in Windows applications. Zeos's Pantera DX4-100 lagged only slightly behind. Even the relatively slow Dimension XPS 4100V from Dell and Deskpro XE 4100 M 525/w from Compaq performed as much as 127 and 88 percent faster respectively than a 66MHz 486DX2 in individual application tests (see "Performance Spotlight: Business Applications," page 123). The bottom line? A DX4 outfitted with VL-Bus or PCI local bus, a fast video accelerator, 16MB of RAM, and a 256K level-2 cache performs only slightly slower than a 66MHz Pentium. Not bad for a system that costs scarcely more than a similarly configured 66MHz 486DX2.



NOTE: THE WINSTONE BENCHMARK RUNS 12 POPULAR WINDOWS BUSINESS APPLICATIONS

Catching Pentiums: Running a mix of graphics- and text-based apps, performance differences were obvious. The NEC and Zeos systems sailed past a 66MHz 486DX2 system.

Compaq Deskpro XE 4100 M 525/w This DX4 system, which joins Compaq's XE family of slim-line Deskpro systems, performed 20 percent faster than Compaq's 66MHz 486DX2-based ProLinea MT CDS. Like its slower sibling, the 4100 M uses Compaq's proprietary QVision video accelerator, which lagged slightly behind other video subsystems in our tests. Also, none of the three side-mounted expansion slots provides local-bus access.

Still, the Deskpro XE 4100 M 525/w performed faster than Dell's Dimension XPS 4100 across the board. The trademark Enhanced Business Audio in the Deskpro series has been upgraded, and the machine comes standard with 16MB of RAM (expandable to 32MB) and a 256K cache. To our disappointment, the dual-speed CD-ROM drive costs extra. And although we like the trim-line case, which sits unobtrusively on a desktop, even simple upgrades like adding RAM often require removing entire components to gain access. Even so, this is a trifle—stock it with all the RAM and drive space your budget will allow, and its quiet fan and compact size will more than compensate for its upgradability.

Dell Dimension XPS 4100V Pity the Dimension XPS 4100V. The long shadows cast by the 90MHz Pentium-based Dimension XPS P90 have made it little more than a curio in Dell's line of systems. The configuration we tested costs more than the XPS P90, yet doesn't deliver anywhere near the performance. Our unit came with a SCSI drive. Systems with IDE drives cost about $500 less. Even so, we found little reason to cheer.

Despite a Diamond Viper video accelerator (with 2MB of dynamic RAM) running on VL-Bus, video performance was mediocre. The pricey SCSI drive on our test model didn't help system throughput a bit. And it's the only DX4 in which the CPU isn't upgradable.

On the plus side, the system comes with a dual-speed CD-ROM drive, a Sound Blaster 16 audio card from Creative Labs, and plenty of room for expansion (seven ISA slots, two of which can share VL-Bus peripherals). Its 17-inch monitor was also one of the finest of the bunch: bright and clear—perfect for running graphical interfaces at 1,024-by-768-pixel

FILEBOX

100MHz DX4s

Pros: Faster than 486DX2s and priced to sell. The new standard.

Cons: Pentiums are still faster—and dropping in price, too.

Suitability: The new desktop workhorses.

Extras: High-speed video, PCI or VL-Bus.

Deskpro XE 4100 M 525/w
$4,870
Compaq Computer Corp.
(800) 345-1518
(713) 378-8820
Reader Service No. 681

Dimension XPS 4100V
$4,728
Dell Computer Corp.
(800) 289-3355
(512) 338-4400
Reader Service No. 682

Image 4100es
$4,680
NEC Technologies
(800) 632-4636
(508) 264-8000
Reader Service No. 683

Pantera DX4-100
$3,195
Zeos Int'l
(800) 554-5218
(612) 362-1234
Reader Service No. 684

resolution. But dollar for dollar, you're far better off buying Dell's splendid Dimension XPS P90—at least until prices of DX4s spiral downward.

NEC Image 4100es The latest in NEC Technologies' Image series nips at the heels of Pentium-class PCs in performance and outclasses almost any PC in multimedia features. The 4100es turned in better benchmark scores than any of the DX4s we tested, thanks to NEC's own video accelerator running on VESA local bus, 16MB of RAM, a 256K CPU cache, and a 540MB Enhanced IDE hard drive also running on local bus. Its performance in business application benchmarks was particularly impressive.

NEC clearly believes you'll want to harness this DX4 horsepower for your business presentations. The Image 4100es comes with a triple-speed CD-ROM drive connected to an internal and external Fast SCSI-2 controller. CD-ROM performance—especially when running full-motion video—was particularly impressive. In addition, the multimedia version of the system comes with Lotus's ScreenCam video capture-and-playback utility, as well as Labtec's CS-100 speakers.

Either way, it's an impressive bundle, although we have our nits to pick. The heat sink on the CPU entirely blocks one of the three expansion slots (two VL-Bus, one ISA). And we found the system somewhat pricey, despite its rich array of features. Still, it's tops for 486 performance and a superb multimedia PC. If your multimedia presentations are worth a $1,500 premium, take the Image 4100es over the Pantera DX4-100.

Zeos Pantera DX4-100 It's fitting that Zeos named its DX4 after a 150-mph sports car. The Pantera tore through our benchmark tests. This owed in large part to a PCI-based Diamond Viper video accelerator—the Pantera was the only PCI DX4 we tested. Because the DX4 CPU is pin-compatible with the 486 chip, most system makers simply retrofit existing motherboards with the clock-tripled CPU. This is why most of the DX4s coming to market use VL-Bus, not PCI.

Local bus aside, the Pantera would have taken top honors in performance were it not for the slight edge NEC's Image 4100es pulled in word processing and spreadsheet chores. At $1,485 less than the Image 4100es, however, we'd happily settle for second place, especially considering what you get for the money. With 16MB of RAM, a 256K cache, a 528MB IDE hard drive running on local bus, a dual-spin CD-ROM drive, and a 17-inch monitor, the Pantera costs $3,195. Our recommendation? Pony up for a sound card and a 1-gigabyte drive, then make off like a thief.

75MHz Blue Lightning: Alaris Cougar EnergySmartPC BL3X/75

Price Killer

FILEBOX

COUGAR BL3X/75

Pros: Look for it to drive prices of other 486s through the floor.

Cons: It can't keep up with 100MHz DX4s—and barely bested a 486DX2.

Suitability: Penny-wise power in a desktop, but wait for 100MHz versions.

Extras: Toshiba dual-spin CD-ROM drive, 15-inch monitor.

$3,716
Alaris
(510) 770-5700
Reader Service No. 685

Feel the heat, DX4? Barely out of the gate, you already face competition from IBM's clock-tripled Blue Lightning CPU, which can't beat you in performance, but swaggers with a distinct price advantage, as we found with Alaris's Cougar EnergySmartPC BL3X/75.

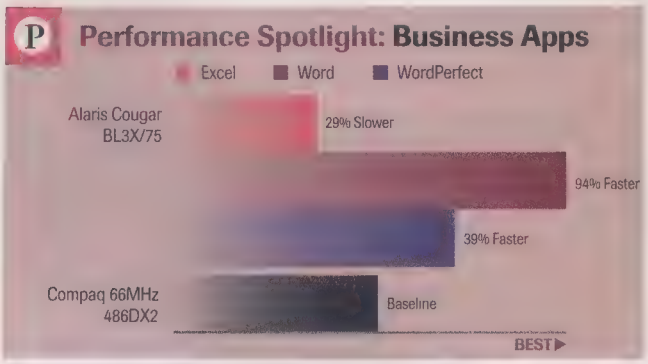
Slow Peripherals Second only to Zeos's Pantera DX4-100 in low cost, the $3,716 Cougar comes with a 75MHz clock-tripled Blue Lightning from IBM (100MHz versions will soon be available). Performance was mixed. In graphics-intensive applications, the system barely nosed ahead of Compaq's 66MHz 486DX2-based ProLinea MT CDS—in some it cases ran slower. Its numbers were brighter in business applications tests—an average of 54 percent faster.

A faster video accelerator would help. The Cougar uses its own, running on VL-Bus with only 1MB of memory. The hard drive also runs on local bus. Outfitted with 16MB of RAM (expandable to 54MB), a 256K cache, and a Cyrix math coprocessor, the Cougar truly shines in processor-intensive chores.

Like the DX4, the Blue Lightning contains a full 16K of internal cache, but also benefits from a level-2 cache—probably more so, given that the chip uses a 386-bus interface. This fall IBM reportedly plans to introduce the Blue Lightning-2, which will have a 486-bus interface and should perform 10 to 20 percent faster than the current 100MHz version. But because the chip will still lack an integrated floating-point unit, look for the DX4 to maintain its performance edge.

Driving Prices Down Price is another matter. Expect at least a 20 percent cost saving in Blue Lightning systems over equivalently equipped DX4s—that is, until competition between these chips and offerings from Cyrix turns into an out-and-out price brawl (excuse us if we start to drool).

The Cougar comes fully dressed with seven expansion slots, two of which can be used for VESA local-bus peripherals. The dual-speed CD-ROM drive controller has an external port, which we'd like to see on more systems. The Cougar is a fine system on the whole, but we'd highly recommend you go with the 100MHz version to get all the performance help you can.



A Mixed Bag: There's no math coprocessor on IBM's Blue Lightning chip, although Alaris included one on the Cougar's motherboard. Even so, its performance lagged in Excel.

The perfect mate.
Works hard.
Has lots of energy.
Never snores.

The TI TravelMate™ family of notebooks offers the perfect workmate to increase your productivity. Because different kinds of people have very different demands, we have created two series – the 4000E and the 4000M – to meet your individual needs.

Every member of the TravelMate family features a powerful 486 processor – up to 75MHz. Combined with monochrome or brilliant color displays, superb battery life, and a variety of configurations, you can be more productive even when you're on the go. The TI TravelMate notebooks – there's a perfect mate for you.

The perfect desktop replacement. The TravelMate E Series.

Looking for the expansion capabilities of a desktop coupled with the portability and convenience of a notebook? Turn to the TravelMate 4000E Series. Partner the TravelMate 4000E with TI's Intelligent Docking System and you have the ultimate desktop PC replacement. Just insert any of the eight models of TravelMate 4000E notebooks into the Intelligent Docking System, push a button and the auto-load mechanism does the rest. Your TravelMate 4000E is now automatically configured as a desktop PC. It knows whether you have an external monitor, keyboard, internal modem and

The TravelMate Notebooks Now there's a perfect

TravelMate E Series

- Eight 486 models ranging from a 25MHz up to a racy IntelDX4™/75MHz
- 4mm full-travel keyboard with a desktop feel, Microsoft BallPoint™ mouse with QuickPort™ connection
- Disk storage from 120MB to 455MB
- Desktop Replacement: Intelligent Docking System with 6 ISA and 2 PCMCIA card slots as well as 4 drive bays for additions such as hard drives, CD-ROM, tape drives and more

intel inside

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other peripheral devices. When you're ready to hit the road, simply click an icon and the system saves the files you're working on, closes Windows™ and ejects your TravelMate 4000E. Then you're on your way – that's true desktop replacement.

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If you're looking for a notebook computer that is multimedia-ready, TI brings you the new TravelMate 4000M Series. From the moment you see our TravelMate 4000M, you'll appreciate how much performance it packs into its sleek new design and conveniently located integrated pointing device.

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mate for everyone.

TravelMate M Series

- Four 486 models ranging from a 25MHz to a racy IntelDX4™/75MHz
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- Disk storage from 120MB to 340MB
- Portable CD-ROM Docking System option with a double-speed CD-ROM drive and built-in stereo speakers

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TEXAS INSTRUMENTS

Circle 163 on reader service card.

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80MHz PowerPC: Apple Power Macintosh 8100/80 AV

Best of **Both?**

FILEBOX

POWER MAC 8100/80 AV

Pros: Astonishing raw power for native graphics applications.

Cons: It runs Windows, but only reluctantly.

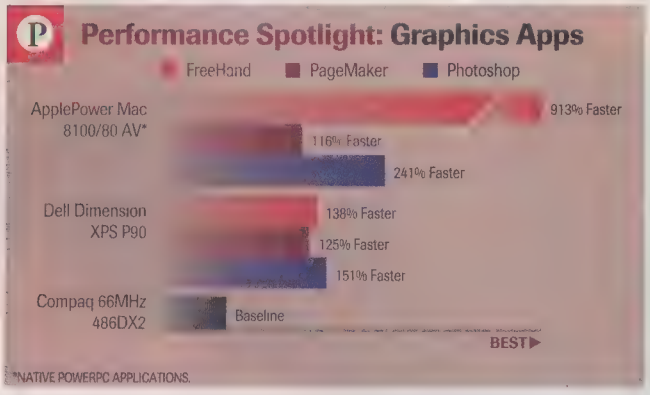
Suitability: A graphics professional's dream machine.

Extras: 16-bit stereo sound, dual-speed CD-ROM drive.

$7,592
Apple Computer
(800) 776-2333
(408) 996-1010
Reader Service No. 686

Never thought you'd love a Mac, did you? Neither did we. Yet by anyone's reckoning, Apple has done a smashing job with the Power Macs it introduced in March to great media buzz. Not only do the machines run both Windows and Macintosh software, but they provide true RISC power for the lowest price you'll find anywhere.

Our tests of the top-of-the-line 80MHz Power Macintosh 8100/80 AV demonstrated breathtaking performance when the machine ran native applications—roughly the same performance you'll get from a 90MHz Pentium system. Likewise, most current users of 68030-based Macintosh systems will see a slight performance improvement, or at least no hit in performance (for those who use 68040 machines).



Go Native: Apple's system races at native graphics programs, particularly math-intensive ones such as Aldus's FreeHand that avail the chip's superscalar architecture.

Windows Emulation Windows performance is another matter. Even the Power Mac 8100/80 AV chugged well behind a 66MHz 486DX2 when emulating Windows applications via Insignia Solutions' SoftWindows. Speed more closely approximated a 25MHz 486 or, in some cases, a 386. You'll be underwhelmed.

Still, the machines offer a lot for the money. All Power Macintosh systems come in an audio/video configuration—an A/V card that plugs into the machine's processor direct slot and an internal dual-speed CD-ROM drive. The 80MHz model comes with three full-sized NuBus expansion slots.

Borrowing from PCs Apple plans to eventually adopt PCI local bus. It also borrowed a 256K level-2 cache from the PC world. Our system came with 24MB of RAM (8MB is standard), expandable to 256MB, and a 1GB SCSI hard drive. Prices start at a minimal $2,200 for the 60MHz version with a 14-inch monitor, then run steeply upward, as our $7,592 test model shows.

Should you bite? If you need a hearty RISC workstation that dabbles in *x*86 applications, you'll find the Power Mac a great solution. But most of us will wait until key *x*86 applications are recompiled into the PowerPC's native mode. IBM's PowerPC, due this fall, may help sway software developers to bring their applications over. Until then, the risks are too high.

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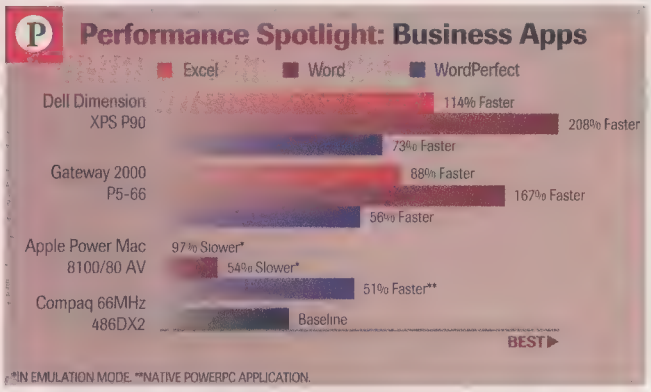
There is an outfit in Russia that lets anyone with the cash ride in a MiG fighter for $4,000. Here's a better buy for thrills: Dell's Dimension XPS P90. It is, quite simply, the fastest PC we've seen.

Hand it to Dell for its engineering wizardry. Like most Pentium systems, the Dimension XPS P90 uses PCI local bus. Our evaluation unit came with a 1GB Enhanced IDE hard drive on local bus, as well as Number Nine's blisteringly fast #9GXE64 Pro video card, stocked with 4MB of VRAM.

64-Bit Video As our performance benchmarks prove, the Dimension XPS P90 races through graphics-intensive applications—more than 200 percent faster than Compaq's ProLinea MT CDS. And it's more than 250 percent faster in business applications such as word processing and spreadsheets.



Pedal to the Floor: Dell's hearty Dimension XPS P90 is 80 percent faster than an average 66MHz 486DX2 and 20 percent faster than a 66MHz Pentium. Sign us up!

Dell's Dimension XPS P90 includes a 256K write-back external CPU cache. Despite the Pentium's dual internal caches (8K for instructions, 8K for data), external caches are necessary for maximum throughput. The Dimension XPS P90 comes standard with 8MB of memory, although you'll certainly want to bump that up to 16MB to see the kind of performance we did with Windows (RAM is expandable to 128MB).

Sound Choice As you'd expect, the Dimension XPS P90 is a multimedia machine—perhaps the perfect multimedia machine, because its fast CPU can truck through rich data types without a gasp. It comes with a dual-speed CD-ROM drive from Panasonic, a Sound Blaster 16 audio card from Creative Labs, and Dell's own 17-inch UltraScan monitor. In addition, the microphone, speaker jacks, and volume controls are easily accessible for business presentations spiked with animation or video.

In case it's not already obvious, we like Dell's Dimension XPS P90 despite its big, boxy case. And while fast Pentiums already appear in Dell's OmniPlex system line, we're delighted to see a value-line PC sporting this much power. Don't let its $4,319 price fool you; the Dimension XPS P90 cuts no corners. Dollar for dollar, it's a power user's dream.

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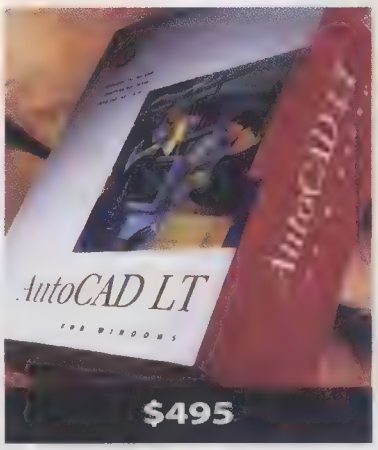
If you need a CAD package but don't need all the sophistication of AutoCAD® software, don't settle for a cheap imitation. Get new AutoCAD® LT for Windows.™ Unlike those "bargain" packages, it's based on the world standard—AutoCAD—and gives you features the others can't duplicate. Like more accurate 2D drawing tools for designing discrete parts. 3D design and layout tools and full support for layers and blocks. And drawings you can link, so changes on the master are automatically reflected in other drawings. What's more, making these drawings is as easy as using a few simple icons and tools. But if you do find yourself with a question, you'll have access to on-line help as well as free 90-day product support. And since AutoCAD LT reads and writes data just like AutoCAD software, your work will be compatible with over a million AutoCAD users worldwide. Chances are your clients and colleagues are among them. So beware of cheap imitations. Visit your Authorized AutoCAD Dealer or leading retail software store. Or, for a free demo disk, call 1-800-228-3601 and ask us for Demopack A217. Outside the U.S. and Canada, fax 415-491-8311.

And one inexpensive one.



Autodesk.

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Final Analysis: How They Stack Up

Chips on the Table

It's too bad sports cars don't follow the same power/price curve of today's top-of-the-line PCs. We'd all drive Maseratis. As the chip wars get hotter and prices plunge, low-performance systems can no longer claim a right to your desktop. But with the flurry of new CPUs landing in the desktop market, finding the system that delivers the best performance for your dollar isn't as easy as it was just a year ago. Our tests helped us answer some key questions:

How do the new chips compare? Pentium systems are rockets when it comes to running sophisticated business and graphics applications, but their real potential lies in forthcoming 32-bit programs, including the next version of Microsoft Windows. Apple's Power Macintoshes, meanwhile, are a logical upgrade for those squarely positioned in the Mac camp, but Windows users will find the selection of native Power Mac applications limited. Finally, clock-tripled 486 systems like those based on the DX4 and Blue Lightning chips are the ideal network nodes—affordable systems for mainstream spreadsheet, word processing, and database applications.

If Pentiums are faster, why buy a system based on the DX4 or Blue Lightning chips? Price. The clock-tripler CPUs now coming to market are 486s that offer as much as a 60 percent performance boost over current 66MHz 486DX2-based systems. They typically cost 20 percent less than comparable Pentiums and face tremendous downward price pressure, thanks to competing CPUs from Cyrix, Advanced Micro Devices, and other newcomers.

As we were going to press, Intel was reported to be cutting DX4 chip allotments to desktop makers and pushing Pentiums in their place. Intel flatly denies that it is orphaning the DX4, and Compaq, Dell, and others continue to actively build desktop systems for the chip. Nevertheless, Pentium prices are falling fast. Although system manufacturers will continue to sell both, 66MHz and 90MHz Pentiums are likely to have the price-to-performance edge by year's end.

DECISION MAKER — CHOOSE A SYSTEM THAT SUITS YOUR APPLICATIONS

1 Choose the factor most important to you.	2 Choose the next most important factor.	3 What else is important?	4 For your needs, the best product to buy is . . .
General Business	Performance	Price	Dell Dimension XPS P90
		Native Applications	Dell Dimension XPS P90
	Price	Performance	Zeos Pantera DX4-100
		Expandability	Zeos Pantera DX4-100
Multimedia	Performance	Price	Dell Dimension XPS P90
		Native Applications	Dell Dimension XPS P90
	Price	Performance	NEC Image 4100es
		Expandability	Dell Dimension XPS 4100V
Graphics, CAD, & Developer's Workstation	Performance	Price	Dell Dimension XPS P90
		Native Applications	Power Mac 8100/80 AV
	Price	Performance	Dell Dimension XPS P90
		Expandability	Dell Dimension XPS P90

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	TI microMarc Color	HP DeskJet™ 500C
Print Quality: Graphics	*300 dpi x 300 dpi*	*300 dpi x 300 dpi*
Resident Fonts	*600 dpi x 300 dpi*	*300 dpi x 300 dpi*
Speed: Color	*Up to 1 ppm*	*Up to .67 ppm*
Monochrome	*Up to 5 ppm*	*Up to 3 ppm*
Memory	*128K*	*48K*
Paper Tray	*120 sheets*	*100 sheets*
Standard Fonts	*5*	*3*
Weight	*11 lbs.*	*14 lbs.*

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Notes:

SYNOPSIS

ASK AND RECEIVE: *Share information with discussion databases.* **140**

STORING YOUR DATA: *Document management over networks.* **142**

CLICK AND SEND: *Use macros for workflow automation.* **146**

NOTES AND THE GANG: *Can Microsoft (and other challengers) take Notes?* **148**

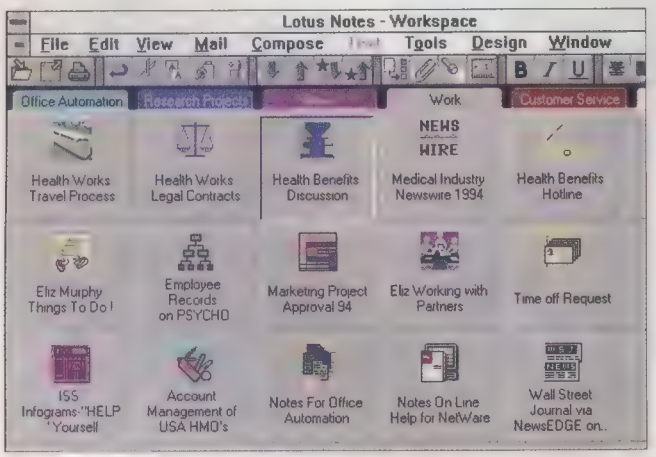
What is this thing called Notes—and why is it such a big deal? For sheer conceptual complexity, Lotus Notes ranks right up there with the greatest mysteries of our age. Explain how Notes works? We'd rather tackle a simpler topic, thank you—like how the great pyramids were built, why the Chicago Cubs haven't won the World Series since 1908, or how the federal deficit is really calculated. But here's the short version: Notes is Lotus Development's long-term gamble that the future of computing is about helping groups of people share information and ideas, even when they're separated by multiple time zones and a couple of oceans.

It's been under development for more than a decade, and in shrink-wrap for more than five years. Today there are nearly one million Notes users worldwide, many in Really Big Business. As its entry cost has dropped over the years to less than $1,000, it has become accessible to smaller companies, too. A joint venture between Lotus and AT&T will soon make Notes even more available and out-of-the-box valuable to anyone with a PC and a modem.

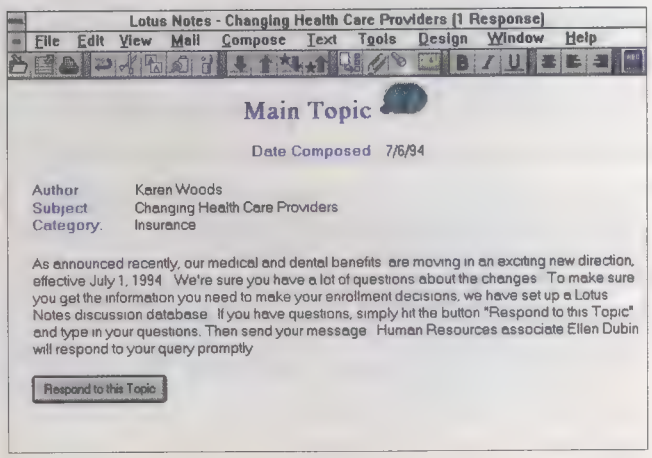
Still don't get it? OK, try this explanation: Notes is a graphical client-server development environment for distributing a new class of information-rich applications.

If that doesn't tell you much, consider this: Its heart and soul is a database. There's a message transport layer—sort of like e-mail on steroids—that constantly compares and synchronizes copies of databases distributed across file servers and workstations. The next node on the network may be right down the hall or

THE NOTES WORKSPACE: Each icon represents a database, complete with data, macros, access control, and replication tools.



DISCUSSION DATABASES: To begin a discussion, use this Main Topic form. The developer who created the screen below has attached a simple macro to an onscreen button that lets you respond easily and instantly.



Mailboxes, Etc.

half a world away—no matter. Notes assumes that people are mobile and that many users are only occasionally connected to the network.

Sophisticated Security Notes is stuffed with security features even an MIS manager would love, including access controls that let you put a "top secret" stamp on sensitive information. Its public-key/private-key encryption techniques are straight out of a Tom Clancy novel: With a roomful of massive parallel processors and a couple of months, you could crack the code on a single message. Maybe.

You can use Notes to create fully indexed libraries of business information, track versions of important documents as they evolve, provide a virtual meeting room for online discussions, or even automate business processes.

It's tied directly to the file system of the computers it runs on, and in some cases, it even replaces that file system with a more intelligent one. This means that Windows users can effortlessly exchange information and ideas with co-workers who use Macintoshes, Sun workstations, or OS/2 systems.

Still don't get it?

That's not surprising. Until they've used Notes, most people wonder what the fuss is all about. And if it's poorly integrated into their working lives, even some Notes users may not get it.

The Notes Advantage There are a hundred ways to misunderstand Notes. The sum of the parts may be impressive, but the parts themselves can be considerably less than awe-inspiring. If all you want is e-mail, you'll be underwhelmed by Notes' clunky mail system. Database developers who are used to building elegant relational models will be frustrated by the flat-file structure of Notes' databases. And when programmers who are used to modern C-like languages or different flavors of BASIC see the cryptic @Function syntax in Notes macros . . . well, they might feel like they've stepped out of Mr. Peabody's Wayback Machine and into the bright sunlight of 1983.

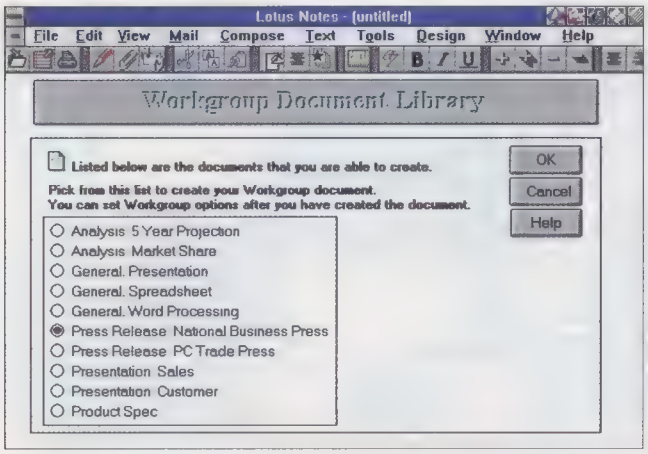
Despite these shortcomings, Notes is successful because no one else does a better job of putting all of the pieces together. If you need a database application that's accessible to anyone in your worldwide organization—with real security and programmatic intelligence—you have two choices: You can hire a team of programmers and turn them loose on the job for a few months, or you can build a slightly less polished Notes application in a few days.

The best way to explain Notes is to look at how it handles typical business challenges. In context, it's easier to see its vast potential, occasionally frustrating interface, and missing pieces.

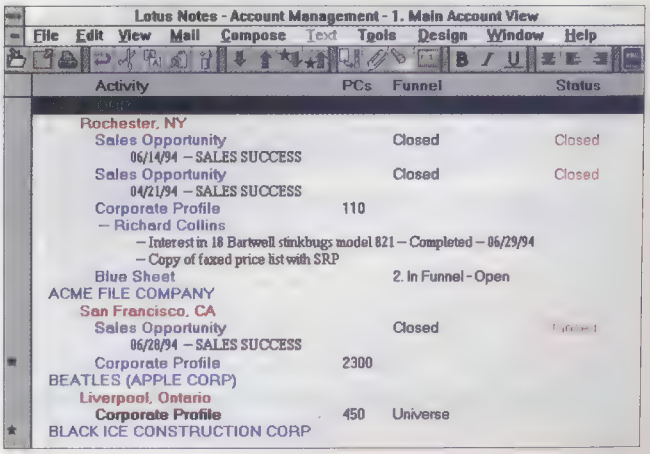
Is this the future of software? Yes. Everyone who's anyone in software—including Microsoft and Novell—has a Notes-killer under development. But for now, Notes is the standard against which they'll all be compared.

BY ED BOTT

DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT: Notes/FX, a document library system, will soon be part of Lotus SmartSuite, a collection of business tools. When you choose a document type from the menu, a custom distribution list is built on the fly.



WORKFLOW AUTOMATION: Business procedures can become routine. This automated sales-tracking database lets your sales representatives and their managers focus on their leads. The stars at left indicate unread documents.



Ask and Receive

The business challenge: Meetings last too long, accomplish too little, and often the people who really need to be there are on the road. E-mail offers only limited help—it's hard to follow a thread or attach supporting documents. As a result, decisions are deferred, strategies are postponed, and business just muddles along.

The Notes solution: discussion databases. These are the meat and potatoes of Notes. Imagine an ad hoc bulletin board, a sort of do-it-yourself CompuServe-style forum for anyone linked to the network. You can follow threads, create responses, control who participates in a conversation, even forward notes via e-mail or fax.

The basic building blocks of Notes databases are documents and responses. A document can be a simple half-page memo or a complex report stuffed with text, graphics, scanned images, voice messages, and even video clips. A response is a special subclass of documents, usually indented beneath the document to which it responds.

To start a new thread in a Notes discussion database, you choose a form from the Compose menu. The data that appears in the individual fields on the form comes from a variety of sources. Some, like the author's name and department, may be filled in automatically by formulas that look up entries in the Notes address book. Others, like the topic and message contents, are under your control. The form designer (any workgroup member) may add radio buttons, check boxes, or keyword lists to limit the entries allowed in crucial fields.

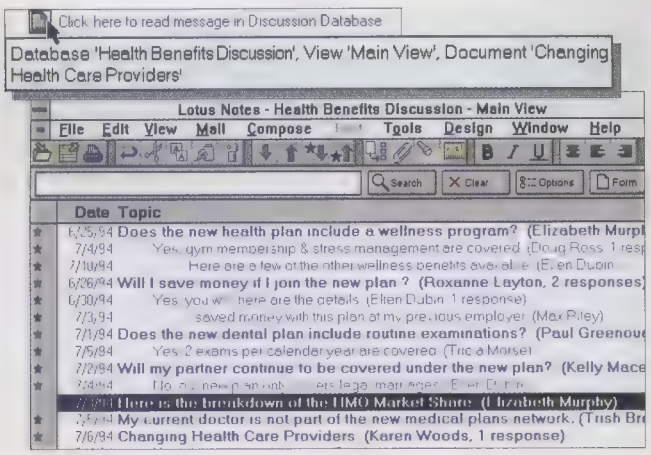
Anyone can participate in a Notes discussion—as long as the database manager grants them access rights. Notes uses a hierarchy of access privileges to control who does what in a database. Managers, for instance, can edit forms and views, add and delete documents, and revise access lists. Editors can change and delete any document, while Authors can read all documents and add new ones, but edit only documents they've created.

Speak Out Participating in a Notes database is easy if you have a direct connection to the server on which the original database is stored. But notebook users and network clients on other servers can also join in thanks to Notes' secret weapon: replication (see "Notes Replication Keeps Databases in Sync with Each Other," page 143).

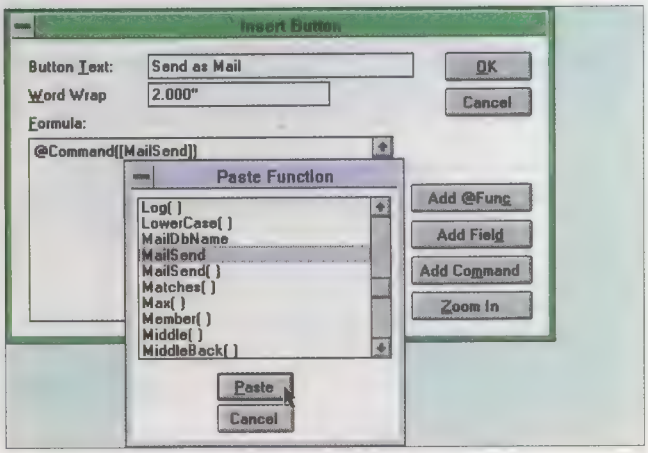
Linking Notes As long as key participants can be reached via e-mail, the flow of information doesn't stop if they don't check in for a few days. The trick is to build a simple formula that links selected document types to e-mail. For example, the Notes designer might add a check box labeled "urgent" to a template. When that box is checked in a given document, it triggers a formula that forwards a short message to a predefined list of e-mail addresses. Or the mail message can contain a Notes DocLink—a push button that lets the recipient hook right into the discussion database and read the associated document instantly.

Notes discussion databases aren't perfect. Like most Notes databases, they're only effective when every member of the workgroup participates actively in them, and securing that kind of cooperation can be management's worst nightmare. But when the members of a workgroup use them diligently, Notes-based discussions can have powerful results.

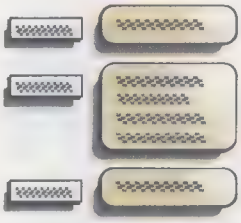
PARTICIPATION: With two mouse clicks you can add a DocLink, complete with pop-up help, to an e-mail message. As shown here, the push button at the top lets your recipient join the discussion below immediately.



RESPONSES: The Notes macro language may be quirky, but building a macro formula is as simple as clicking your mouse. In this case, you can use the pop-up list to paste @Functions into a button macro.



Databases are the basic working units of Notes. They're represented on the desktop by icons you add to the Notes workspace. Each database consists of a group of **documents,** and their **forms** (with data **fields** filled in) and views, stored under one name. A database can be simple (an address book with a few documents and a single view) or staggering (the plans for a major office complex, with tens of thousands of documents and hundreds of views). The database and document **headers** allow data to be easily managed and replicated.



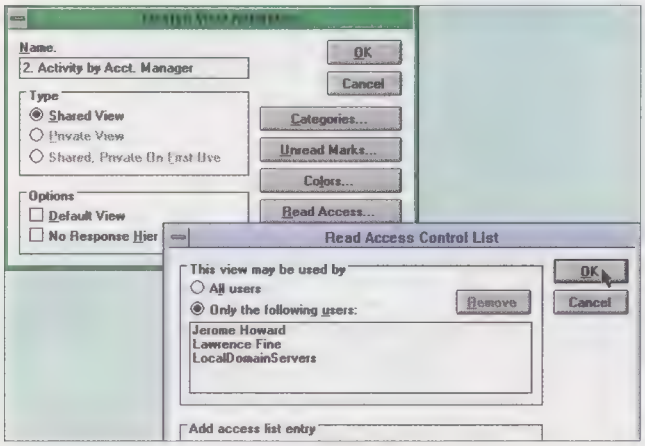
Databases Groups of information that can be organized by topic or other criteria are called databases and serve as the basis for workgroup activities.

Documents Each database contains a set of documents. Some documents contain definitions of forms and views, others contain data.

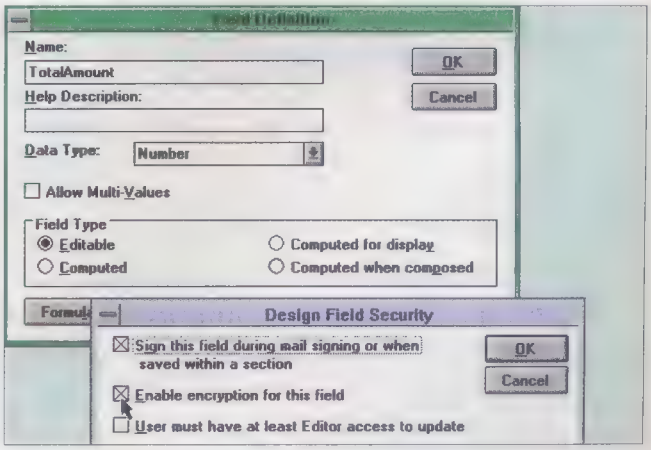
Forms and Fields Special template documents called forms can be controlled by formulas and macros that validate input, fill in data, or even launch complex sequences of events. Data is entered and stored within each document in a set of fields. Each field has a name, a simple or structured data type, and contents. It may also contain formula-based macros that run when certain events occur.

Headers The information at the top of each database and document lets the database replicate itself across a network or phone line. The database header contains information about contents, replication settings, and access privileges. The document header includes ID fields for the note and its originator, plus information about when the document was last accessed or changed.

ACCESS CONTROL: As a database developer, you can control access to the database by assigning rights governing user's abilities to read and modify data. You can also limit certain views to specific users, as in this example.



SECURITY: Notes uses the public-key/private-key encryption method to protect data. As a general user or the database designer, you can encrypt an entire database or limit encryption to just a single field, as shown here.



Storing Your Data

The business challenge: Let's be honest, most business documents are mind-numbingly repetitive—just variations of paperwork we've produced ad nauseam. Fill-in-the-blank templates make it easy to concentrate on content instead of form. But with employees scattered around the globe, how do you guarantee that they're using the most up-to-date templates?

The Notes solution: document management. Any business that's interested in productivity uses the built-in template features of spreadsheets, word processors, and presentation graphics programs to automate the process of creating standard documents. Notes lets you store these templates in searchable, fully indexed libraries that can be updated quickly across networks.

In its Windows version, Notes uses OLE to manage file objects. (The Macintosh version uses System 7's Publish & Subscribe feature, while the Sun/Unix versions use a Lotus-developed analog of OLE called LEL—short for Link, Embed, Launch-to-Edit.)

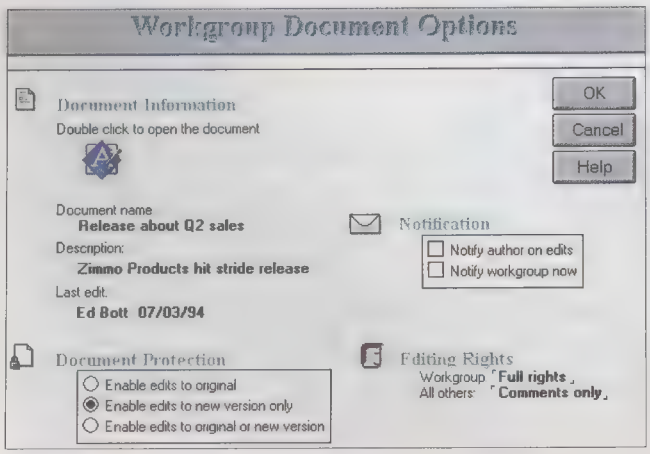
Using a Notes document as a "wrapper" for an OLE object is easy. First, you create a Notes form with fields for title, date created/updated, and so on. Next, you add a "rich text" field—a field especially designed to accommodate an OLE object—and insert an object like a 1-2-3 worksheet or Visio drawing. Use the program that created the object (1-2-3 or Visio) to define standard text, formatting, and how the form handles stored objects. For example, you could hide the Notes document and launch directly into the external application when a document is created or edited. Save the form and Notes becomes the launching pad (literally) for new files created with any application.

Updating standard document types is automatic, thanks to Notes' savvy replication procedures, which distribute forms (and their embedded file objects) to each copy of the database on a regular basis. If the developer keeps the documents in a design template, the updates even trickle down to second-generation databases modeled on the original design.

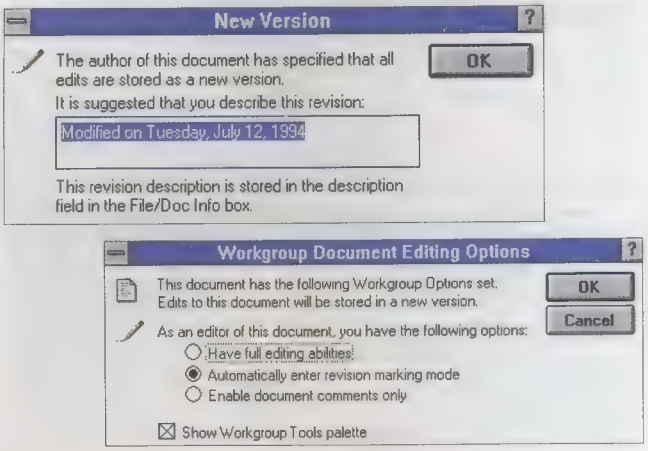
FX Control A feature called Notes/FX (field exchange) extends the capabilities of OLE and makes document libraries and other Notes applications even easier to use. Normally, when you double-click on an embedded object, you turn over control to the object's OLE server—the application that created it. Notes/FX adds a set of OLE-standard interfaces to pass information in either direction between Notes and the OLE server application. Some examples? Notes/FX can fill in an expense worksheet with the author's name and department, and an FX-compliant application can pass spreadsheet totals from the expense worksheet back into a Notes document.

Third-Party Compatibility Lotus applications were the first to be FX-enabled. By the end of summer, expect all of the applications in Lotus's SmartSuite to be compatible with Notes/FX. In addition, some third-party developers have announced or shipped FX-compatible programs. These include Microsoft's Word, Excel, and Powerpoint, which will all support Notes/FX by fall; Clear Software's allClear, a flow-charting program (reviewed in New! May, page 54); and No Hands Software's Common Ground, a tool for distributing formatted documents (reviewed in New! March, page 45).

DOCUMENT CREATION: Notes launches the editor (Ami Pro, in this case) and lets you create the document. Back in Notes, you'll see a screen like this one. Notes/FX has filled in your name and the last-edit date.



NEW VERSION: You can request to be notified by mail when the document is read or edited, and you can restrict others from changing your work by enforcing the use of revision marks and saving edited documents as responses.



WHAT IT MEANS NOTES REPLICATION KEEPS **DATABASES IN SYNC** WITH EACH OTHER

Notes data is distributed across networks and can be stored anywhere—on a NetWare server in Chicago, an OS/2 server in London, or a notebook PC somewhere over the Pacific Ocean. Local **replicas** of the shared data allow users to add and modify documents. To keep the database copies in step, **connection documents** specify a schedule for linking the Notes servers and resynchronizing the database completely or within **parameters.** To do this, Notes identifies matching pairs of **document IDs** and updates older documents.

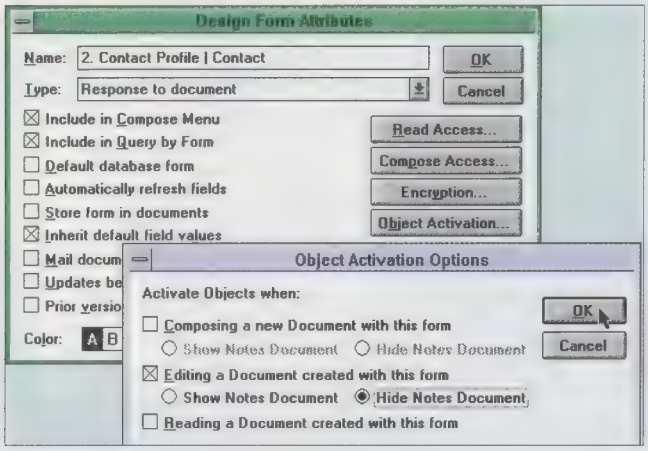
Replicas To create a database replica, Notes copies the original database and adds special fields to track the replication history. You can create as many replicas as you like. One replica of a sales tracking database might be stored on a server, while another is saved on the sales manager's notebook.

Connection documents Information in the databases' connection document tells the server copies how often to connect and what actions to perform.

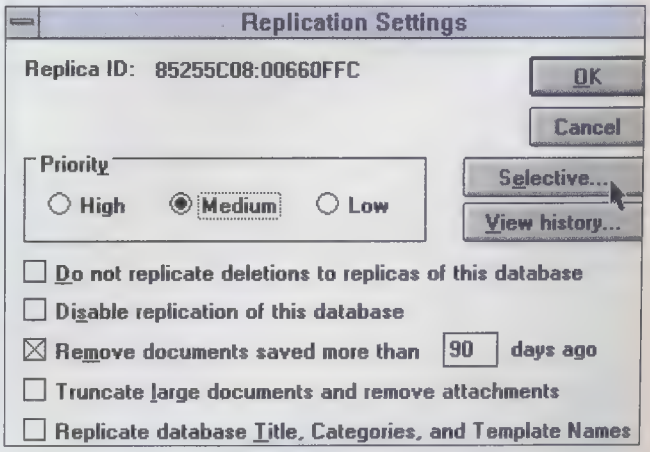
Parameters Remote users typically connect to the server by telephone. Because space on a remote PC is limited, Notes allows you to set parameters for selective replication—by date or topic, for instance.

Document IDs When a server receives a request to replicate, Notes checks the identity and access rights of the machine making the request. Replication itself is a document-by-document comparison: Notes identifies matching pairs of documents by comparing the document IDs found in their headers. When replication times on documents with matching IDs differ, Notes synchronizes them by copying the new document over the older one.

CONTACT PROFILE: To create "seamless" embedded objects, choose the Hide Notes option from this dialog box. When this button is selected, no double-clicking is required; Notes "activates" the object automatically.



REPLICATION SETTINGS: What do you do when the database is 100MB and you have only 10MB of free disk space? Selective replication—by date or by formula—is the answer. Connected servers will resync data.



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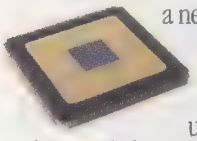

The PowerPC 601 has a lot of power inside it: the combined resources of IBM, Motorola and Apple.

The RISC technology of Power Macintosh brings a whole new level of performance to personal computing. Software written to take advantage of its unique new capabilities, in fact, will run significantly faster than the same programs written for 486 or Pentium processor-based PCs.

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"My next computer will be a PowerPC. I was using Intel-based machines long before the PC was a glimmer in IBM's eye, but as Emerson said, foolishly held consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds.... It's time for a change, and the time is now," wrote Bill Machrone in *PC Week*. "That next machine will probably wear an Apple logo.... Apple appears to be a good six months ahead of IBM in terms of [PowerPC] product development and software integration."

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From left, the new Power Macintosh 8100/80, Power Macintosh 7100/66 and Power Macintosh 6100/60.

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*Effective 3/14/94, Apple Price includes the Power Macintosh 6100/60 with 8MB of memory and a 160MB hard drive. For the sake of custom configuration, keyboard, monitor and mouse are sold separately. Unless bundled with a particular configuration, SoftWindows must be purchased separately. Retail prices may vary depending on location. © 1994 Apple Computer, Inc. All rights reserved. Apple, the Apple logo, Macintosh and the power to be your best are registered trademarks of Apple Computer, Inc. AppleScript, Macintosh PC Exchange, Power Macintosh, QuickTime and TrueType are trademarks of Apple Computer, Inc. PowerPC is a trademark of International Business Machines Corporation used under license therein. Windows is a trademark of Microsoft Corporation and SoftWindows is a trademark of Microsoft Corporation used under license.

Click and Send

The business challenge: In the tick-tock of the Nanosecond Nineties, competitive advantage is defined by the ability to respond in an instant. No one wants to wait—not contractors, not co-workers, and especially not customers. If you can't deliver, someone else will. So you need to know the details fast. For routine jobs, automation works best: Even complicated business processes can become push-button procedures. But with traditional tools, application development can take months, even years. How do you cut the response time to days?

The Notes solution: workflow automation. Notes is tailor-made for the quick development of applications that help groups of people process information collaboratively. Other database tools are more powerful, but none has Notes' built-in messaging capabilities, global addressing, and security features.

Easy Applications Developing a Notes application isn't particularly difficult, although the program could stand some usability improvements. Experienced Notes developers should have little problem scaling up simple departmental applications built in a few hours to serve an entire enterprise.

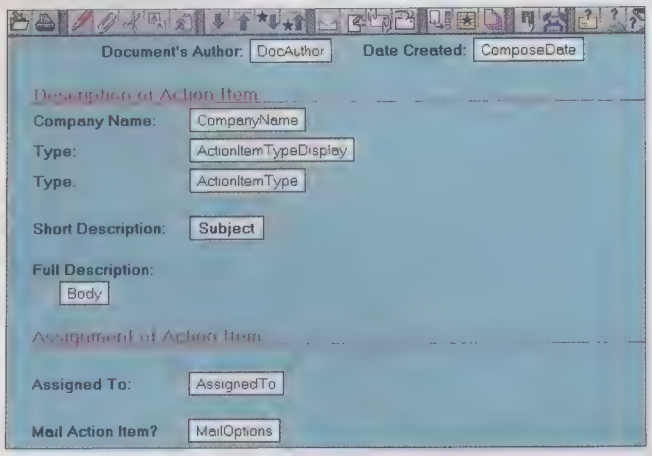
For one-of-a-kind projects, Notes can serve as a capable project manager. For example, a group of engineers might create a Notes database to track a complex design project. Sections of the database created in advance could include attachment documents for progress reports, meeting agendas, follow-up reports, scanned-in drawings, and spreadsheets. As the project proceeds, individual team members fill in the details. And at any point, a workgroup member with proper access could check the project's status.

Programming with Notes Notes applications can also automate routine processes. Operators taking calls on a toll-free number, for instance, might capture information using a simple Notes form with three radio buttons. Requests for information would be automatically routed to the mail room, complaints would be fired off to a supervisor, and order information would be forwarded to the warehouse and the accounting department.

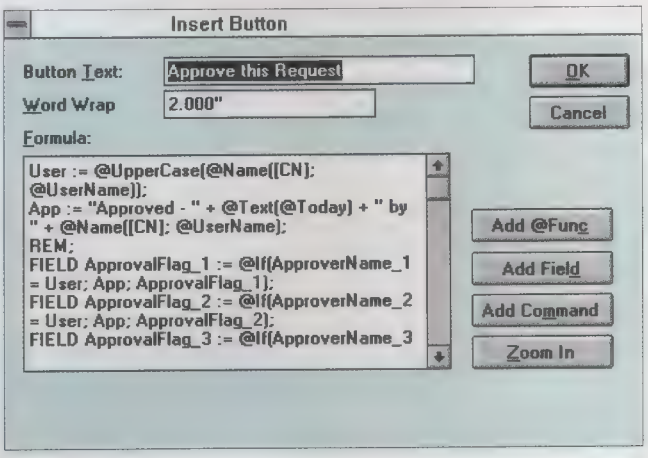
To add intelligence to a Notes database, you must enter the arcane land of Notes formulas and macros. There are almost 200 @Functions and macro fields in the Notes macro language. They can be attached to fields, buttons, or SmartIcons; executed automatically in the background every hour or every day; or set to trigger each time a new document is created. A background macro might pay for itself by scanning the Incoming Calls database each morning for documents that are more than three days old and have "unresolved" as the value in the Status field. The resulting list of potentially unhappy clients would then automatically be mailed to a supervisor.

What if key members of the workgroup aren't part of the network or are away from their usual network connections? Promising Notes extensions enable communication via paper, fax, and even telephone. A series of document imaging add-ons make it possible to scan printed documents, convert them to text using an OCR server, and store the results in Notes documents. Another add-on lets you manipulate Kodak Photo CD images. It's even possible (although not necessarily easy) to capture voice calls and save them in Notes messages.

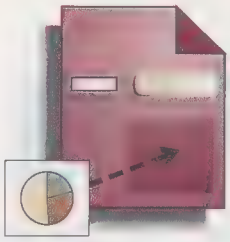
ACTION ITEM: The MailOptions field appears on the Action Item form as a radio box (bottom). When you select it, built-in Notes routines send an e-mail message to the co-worker you've named in the Assigned To field.



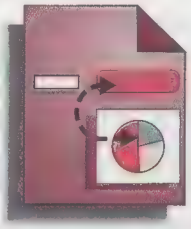
CREATING ROUTES: Notes uses macros to route documents when they're saved or edited, or when you click on a predefined button. In this screen, an "Approve this Request" routing button is being defined.

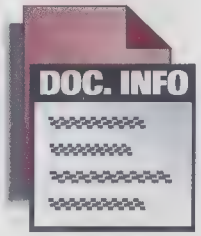


WHAT IT MEANS SHARE INFORMATION AND **MANAGE FILES** VIA NOTES AND OLE



A secret weapon called Notes field exchange (Notes/FX) teams Notes with OLE to manage files and pass information smoothly between Notes databases and applications. First, users **create** the note and **compose** a message. When the user chooses **Update,** Notes taps workgroup editing features and remote accessibility to share information among linked Notes files. Finally, users can **access** the document easily, since Notes avoids frustrating and limiting 8-dot-3 filenames, making Notes' fully indexed document libraries easy to search.





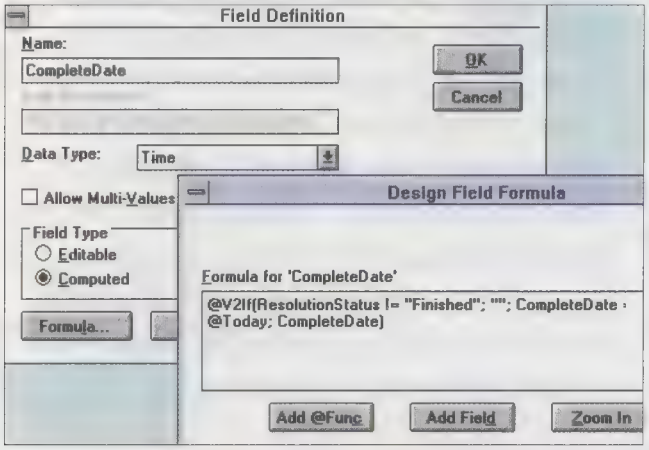
Create The application developer creates a form with an embedded OLE object and tells Notes to make the object "seamless" by hiding the Notes document. For example, a Lotus 1-2-3 spreadsheet can launch a workgroup request for information.

Compose When the user chooses Reply from the menu, Notes activates the OLE server, 1-2-3. The Notes application programming interface (API) lets the spreadsheet program know that the user is composing a new document.

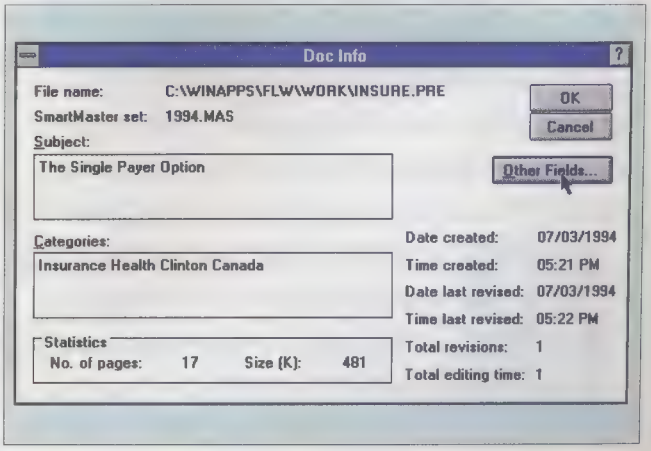
Update The user fills out the reply template and chooses Update from the 1-2-3 menu. Predefined links between the 1-2-3 object and the Notes document mean that changing a field in one updates the other. The Notes/FX protocol retrieves the contents of field names and updates both the Notes and application sides of the OLE communication.

Access After saving the Notes document, the user can choose a Notes view to see vital statistics such as the document's long filename. Any user with the proper access rights can now sort, filter, view, and replicate part or all of the collection of documents.

AUTOMATED RESPONSE: Field definition formulas let you automatically fill in values in response to system events. In this case, Notes puts the date in the CompleteDate field when you click on the OK button.



DOCUMENT INFORMATION: Notes/FX cuts to the chase. Here, the Doc Info dialog box in Lotus Freelance Graphics has been premapped to matching fields in any Notes application, facilitating the exchange of information.



Notes and the Gang

When all you have is a hammer, everything starts to look like a nail.

That's the danger of using an all-purpose development tool like Lotus Notes when another solution might be more appropriate.

Although Notes offers a unique mix of application-building gizmos and message-handling smarts, it's not alone in tackling typical business problems.

Workflow Simple workflow automation is a cinch for a well-integrated mail package like Microsoft Mail. Combined with Word, Excel, or other applications in the latest release of Microsoft Office, Microsoft Mail makes it easy to route a document to a group of co-workers, simultaneously or serially. Lotus offers similar capabilities by combining its own cc:Mail and Lotus SmartSuite.

Other mail-based solutions can duplicate key features of Notes without requiring its long-term commitment. For example, BeyondMail's forms generator and rule-based message-handling system make its e-mail system smarter than most competitors.

If you don't mind slinging code, some mail-based applications can be considerably more flexible than Notes. Microsoft's Visual Basic and Lotus's LotusScript both offer full-strength macro languages that promise to tie off-the-shelf business software into your mail system using OLE 2.0. Borland's Object Exchange (Obex) ties applications like Paradox and WordPerfect for Windows together, but it hasn't gathered much support from other software labels.

Microsoft has already delivered its less-than-$100 Office Developer's Kit, a bundle of Visual Basic, sample applications, and 350MB of documentation designed to let small developers compete with large consulting firms.

Database Applications Powersoft's PowerBuilder and Oracle's Oracle 7 are top examples of no-compromise client-server applications that can tap into relational databases across an enterprise-wide network. Significantly, Powersoft recently shipped its PowerBuilder Library for Lotus Notes, which lets client-server applications tap into Notes database files.

Lotus invented the groupware category in the early days of Windows when critics scoffed that Notes was an answer to a question no one even wanted to ask. The new wave of workgroup-enabled applications now competing with Notes is an emphatic endorsement of Lotus's strategy.

Groupware Notes' most serious short-term competitor is likely to be a descendant of WordPerfect Office, a mail-and-scheduling–based groupware package that new owner Novell may soon beef up. WordPerfect Office already has most of the pieces to compete toe-to-toe with Notes: a powerful messaging engine; a group scheduling program (missing in Notes); a telephone access server; a wide variety of connections to external databases; InForms, a forms development package that lets you build Notes-style forms with intelligent macros attached; and routing capabilities.

SoftSolutions, a recent purchase of WordPerfect, offers sophisticated document management tools that integrate more fully into a wider variety of applications than today's Notes/FX. With the rumored addition of a replication capability (and possibly a new name), WordPerfect Office may become Notes' most serious competitor.

Outside Lotus

A thriving community of third-party developers is already delivering Notes solutions. Last December's **LotusSphere** conference drew 2,500 attendees, including more than 1,000 Notes developers. Collectively, they offer hundreds of prebuilt applications. For a free catalog, *The Lotus Notes Guide,* call (800) 343-5414.

PUBLIC EXCHANGE Lotus and AT&T have unveiled **AT&T Network Notes,** a network of cooperative Notes servers accessible via a toll-free number to businesses and individuals willing to pay for service. Users will have access to rich (and secure) public databases and interactive information exchanges, without the administrative burden and expense of maintaining a Notes network.

There's nothing like highly publicized vaporware to cloud the long-term picture. Notes' most notable potential competitor (it's at least a year away) is Microsoft's Cairo operating system. With its built-in object-oriented filing system and enterprise-wide messaging features, Cairo may build Notes-style functionality right into the operating system. But it's only a distraction for businesses today.

With Notes Release 4 in development, Lotus should consider putting some distance between itself and the competition. The company will have to pay attention to entry costs, which are too high despite the gesture made in the affordable Windows Starter Pack. The dated interface and rudimentary editor found in Notes Release 3 need improvement. Keeping a Notes server humming should be much easier. Likewise for application development.

And finally, there's the culture thing. Notes can be a tool for revolutionary change—or just an expensive and awkward e-mail system. The key to successful implementation of Notes lies in simultaneously effecting shifts in work habits and corporate culture.

AT A GLANCE

LOTUS NOTES

Notes gives new hope to the slow starters of the world. Though it's one of the oldest Windows applications around, Notes reached critical mass only in the last 18 months. It's dogged by myths, including the persistent criticism of its high cost and inflexible hardware demands. With recent releases of a low-cost Windows server for Notes, plus NetWare and Unix versions, that's all changed. But old images die hard.

Where does it run?	Just about everywhere. Notes runs as a client or server on OS/2, Windows, and Unix (Hewlett-Packard and SunSoft Solaris versions), and as a Mac client. A server version for the NetWare Loadable Module is available now; one for Windows NT (Intel only) is due later this year.
What does it cost?	With an initial price of $62,500 for the server software and 200 client licenses, Notes was originally positioned as a tool for large enterprises. Today a Windows Starter Pack with two client licenses and one server license costs just $995.
What are the system requirements?	For a Windows client: 40MB of hard-disk space, at least 6MB of RAM, and a compatible network. For a Windows server: 200MB of hard-disk space and 12MB or more of RAM for ten users. For NetWare, Unix, and OS/2 servers: at least 16MB of RAM.
Isn't it a pain to administer?	Well, yes, but it's no more difficult to administer than any other enterprise-wide application. Release 3's remote administration tools help considerably.
How hard is it to write Notes applications?	If you've ever written a 1-2-3 macro, you can build a Notes database. For sophisticated applications, plan on a week of training to get comfortable with programming Notes.
Can I buy ready-made third-party applications?	Sure. Hundreds of third-party applications are already available and more are on the way. They range from low-cost generic applications to mission-critical industry-specific systems.

Lotus Notes Release 3 / Lotus Development Corp. / (800) 346-1305 / $995 (Windows Starter Pack) / *Reader Service No. 690*

SHARING DATA Houston-based Wolf Communications is also offering a wide-area Notes service, but with a twist that ought to attract small and midsized businesses: On the company's **WorldCom** service, you can share databases, replicate remotely at speeds of up to 14,400 bits per second, and deliver Internet mail and Usenet newsgroups directly to a Notes workgroup.

GROW YOUR NOTES Fax gateways and document imaging add-ons are already included in Notes; multimedia is next. **Video Notes** puts videoconferencing capabilities on top of Notes mail. **Phone Notes** stores voice mail and e-mail in the same in-basket, and gives your customers dial-up access to recorded information or fax-back data sheets from a Notes database.

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A New Face for dBASE

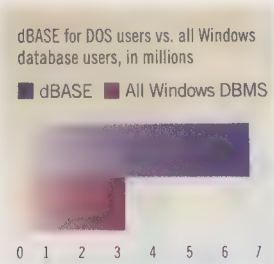
SYNOPSIS

END-USER MAKEOVER: *A friendlier face to a familiar program.* **154**

DEVELOPER DUTY: *Object-oriented tools with backward compatibility.* **155**

USABILITY DATA: *Lack of consistency frustrates users.* **156**

FINAL ANALYSIS: *Gaps for users, great for developers.* **157**



The Case for dBASE: Even if only half of its users upgrade, dBASE would still dominate the Windows DBMS market.

Can the ugly duckling of character-based applications finally grow into a graceful swan under Windows? To find out, we looked at a beta version of Borland's dBASE for Windows. If you're an xBASE developer with Windows on your agenda, you'll want dBASE for Windows. The new version is not just another pretty interface. This release aims to cater to both developers and end users by adding intuitive end-user tools, revamping the xBASE language, and maintaining backward compatibility with the millions of lines of code you've got on your PC. Its powerful object-oriented development tools, uniquely combined with its database engine, knocked our socks off. We weren't as thrilled by the inconsistent and limited tools for end users, however.

The new version will arrive this summer (Borland is shooting for June but won't commit to an exact date), and not a moment too soon. Announced by the late Ashton-Tate in 1991, it may be the longest awaited application release in history. But show some respect—this new version was rebuilt from the ground up, and it's the only application widely used today that debuted as an 8-bit CP/M program back when Jimmy Carter was president.

It's not only survived, it's dominated the DOS database market with 6.7 million users. Even though dBASE IV 1.0 first shipped almost six years ago, users still buy thousands of copies of dBASE III Plus every year because it can run on an 8086 processor with 512K of memory. But some 800,000 users (DOS and Windows combined) have chosen Microsoft's FoxPro for its attractive dBASE compatibility through the standard xBASE development language. Of those users, 300,000 have chosen FoxPro 2.5 for Windows.

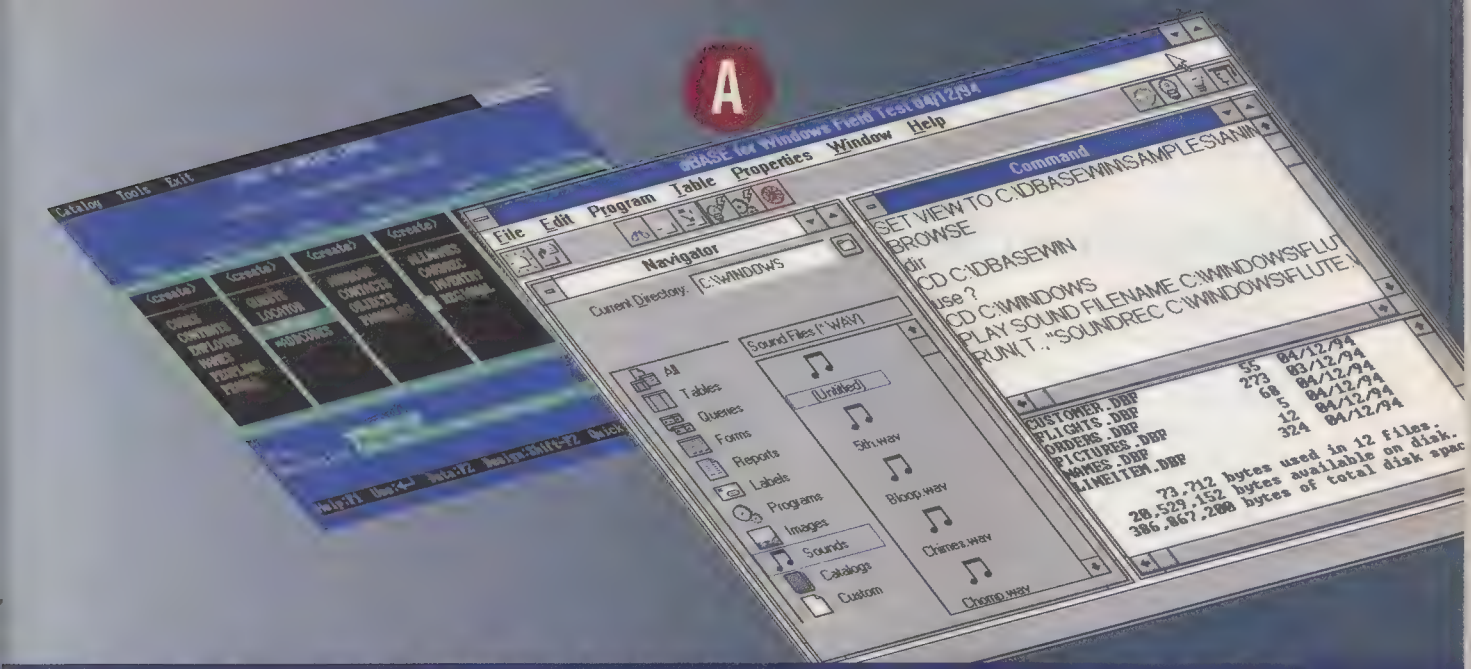
Is this your D day for dBASE? Here's how to decide.

BY YAEL LI-RON

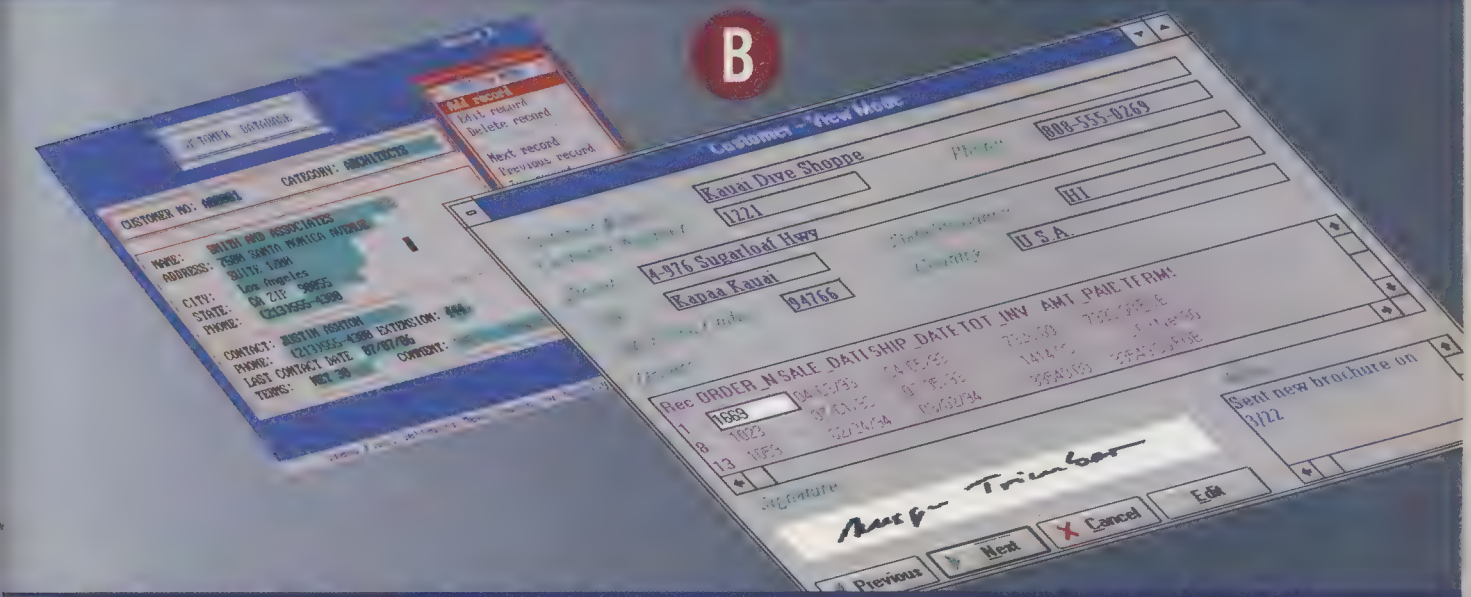
A CONTROL CENTER VS. NAVIGATOR: The new Navigator puts most operations within reach, replacing the old character-based Control Center.

B FORMS: A new designer lets you insert graphics such as signatures, and even spreadsheet-like objects such as order tables.

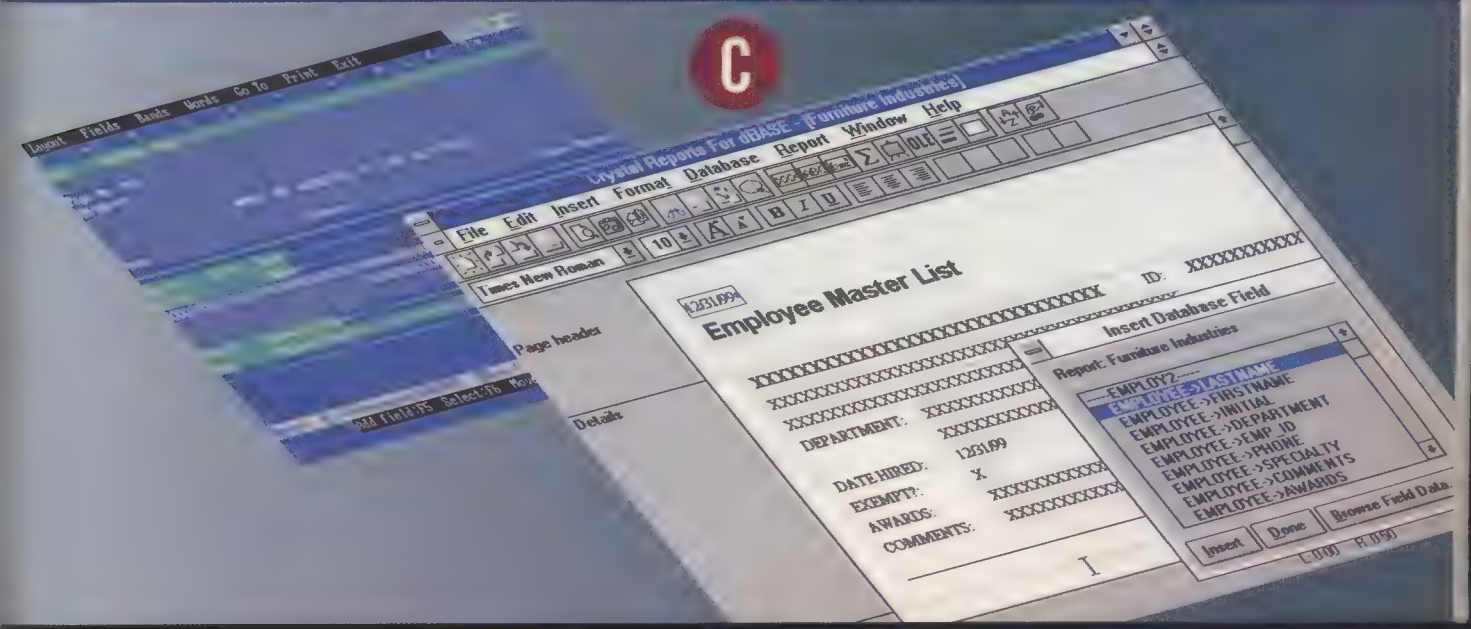
C REPORT GENERATOR: From total drag to drag-and-drop: Crystal Reports lets you insert specific data like employee info into sharp reports.



Years in the making, dBASE is backed by a time-tested **database engine.**



Design tools in Windows build snappy forms the DOS version can't match.



Wanted: Expert Advice

In its utilitarian homeliness, the DOS version of dBASE reveals its CP/M legacy. While the icons, pull-down menus, and drag-and-drop operations of the long-anticipated Windows version are a vast improvement, they take users only halfway to truly intuitive work.

dBASE for Windows doesn't resemble character-based dBASE, and that's its strongest asset for end users. The main work screen, called the Navigator, puts all the necessary tools at your fingertips. You can create new tables, forms, queries, and reports with a few mouse clicks.

On the downside, we were disappointed that this release included only one Expert—an interactive design shortcut for users. At a time when Experts and Wizards rule the day (in comparison, FoxPro has 12), we were disappointed to find just one—for creating forms—in dBASE. Where are the counterparts for reports and queries? Borland will say only that it intends to incorporate more Experts in the next version, but the company won't reveal how many or when we can expect the update. Our guess: A revision to run on Windows 4.0 will appear sometime late next year.

We want more because dBASE's Form Expert is so good. You can create professional-looking data entry screens with just a few keystrokes, and then proceed to modify the design to your heart's content by dragging and resizing objects onscreen. The truly daring can further experiment with custom control buttons, such as OK or Cancel buttons, usually intended for developers.

Crystal Reports, a report generator from Crystal Computer Services, is integrated seamlessly into dBASE. It uses a banded approach (designating data as headline or text and also designating where it fits on the page) similar to dBASE IV, Microsoft's Access, and Borland's own Paradox. In our usability tests, the report generator confused users, making us hunger for the quick-click capability of an Expert design module (see "How Intuitive Is dBASE Now?" page 156).

GUIDED TOUR THE NEW dBASE INTERFACE ADDS BEAUTY BUT NOT CONSISTENCY

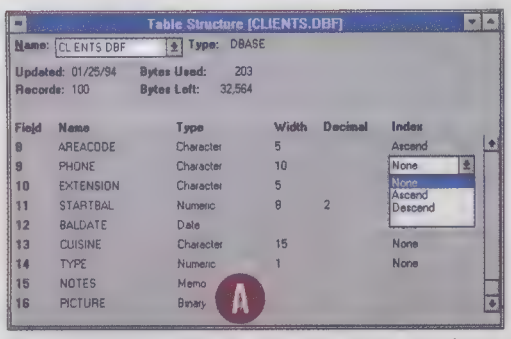
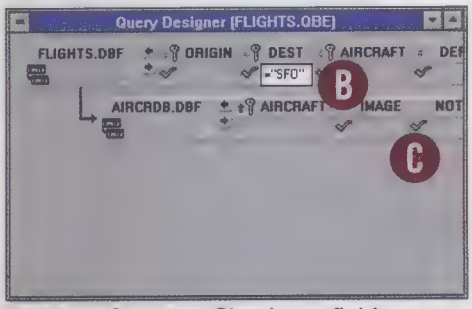
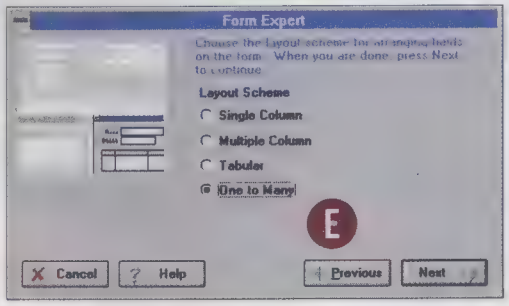


Table Setting: Click on Type or Index and a drop-down menu displays available options. To access this screen from the Navigator, double-click on the right-mouse button. Users had no problem creating or modifying tables.



Quicker Queries: Check any field you want to display in the query, then drag and drop to establish links. dBASE guessed the key field for this link (AIRCRAFT) because it was the only field that was common to both the "flights" and the "aircraft" databases.

Reporting In: The report generator is also the label and cross-tab designer. Use data from your Data File (DBF table), or even from a SQL table. The software offers access to client-server databases.



Forms Factor: We had a taste of this Expert and we want more! Unfortunately, this interactive designer is the only one in this release. However, dBASE for Windows will have 13 online interactive tutors, which will help users with the basics.

A. A **binary field** may contain a WAV file or a graphic. DDE is another new field type.

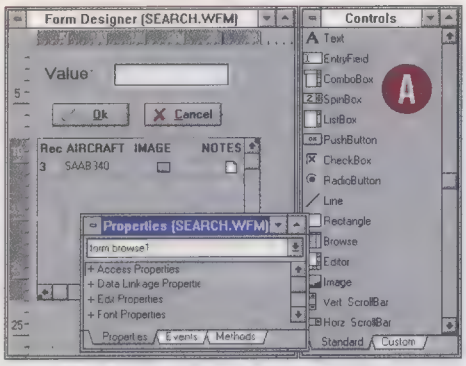
B. Another problem raised in the Usability Labs—**quotation marks** must be placed around character fields or your query won't work.

C. To include all the fields in the **query**, check the box under the table's name. Otherwise, check them one by one. Though it may sound obvious, most of our usability testers had a hard time with this.

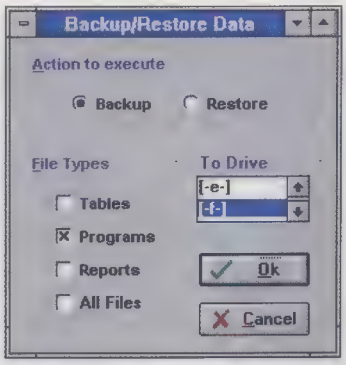
D. The **Data Dictionary** extends a table's structure with additional default values, so that a particular field will automatically contain predetermined information. This makes data entry more efficient.

E. For point of sale or similar applications, use **One to Many** to place a browse box inside your form.

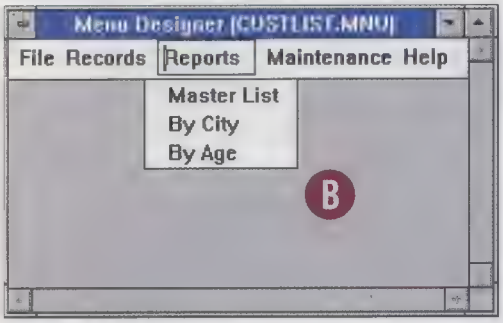
GUIDED TOUR LESS CODING, **MORE OBJECTS**—AND THE DEVELOPERS GO WILD



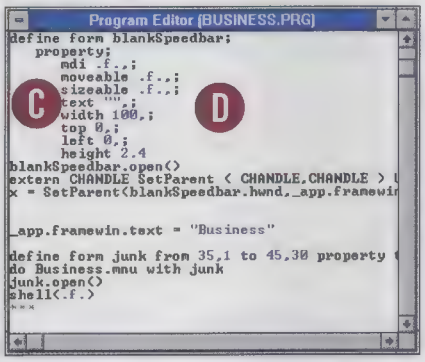
Custom Control Freaks: Pick a button, any button, and add it to your form or create a custom control. Even access third-party VBXs to use as native dBASE controls.



Menu or Form? When asked to create a menu (such as a back-up application), developers in our usability tests assumed they needed to create a form.



Zip Code: How many lines of code did it take to create this menu? Zero. Zilch. Nada. The Menu Designer is a slick tool, and it generates standard dBASE code. The bad news is that there's no compiler yet.



The dBASE You Know: Familiarity and object-oriented capabilities make it worth upgrading to the Windows version. With the dBASE engine, the object programming is unbeatable.

A. Buttonhooks galore. Insert radio buttons, check boxes, browse boxes, and more. It's as easy as clicking on the **Controls menu.**

B. Thirty-second menu creation. Type CREATE MENU [*menu name*] and start typing bar after bar. To move sideways, press Tab. Create submenus just as easily.

C. Convenient **color coding** comes courtesy of the Borland language group. Because you can quickly scan the code for anomalies, it makes debugging much simpler.

D. Actual work begins when you need to attach actions to each menu bar at the source-code level. The **new object-oriented extensions** to the dBASE language require a somewhat steep learning curve, but once you master them, you'll wonder how you ever programmed without them.

Objects of Desire

dBASE developers are a persnickety bunch. "Give me a dot prompt," they tell you, "and I'll be fine. Who needs cute icons when I can type deliciously cryptic commands in a text editor?" If this sounds like you, prepare to be surprised. Sure, you can still hack away happily in dBASE for Windows, but you'll be sorry if you don't take advantage of the built-in GUI tools that manage the mundane work for you. The bad news: A compiler, crucial for any application distribution, isn't scheduled to ship until six months after this version is released.

In dBASE for Windows, Borland is for the first time combining object-oriented programming with a built-in database engine. The application won't hold that unique position for long—though Microsoft won't confirm, the next version of FoxPro is planned to be object-oriented as well. Similarly, Computer Associates plans to release an object-oriented database called CA-Visual Objects later this summer, providing backward compatibility for Clipper developers. Borland has maintained the standard dBASE language while incorporating objects. The resulting program smoothly ushers any reluctant developers into high-level languages like C++. The learning curve may be a bit steep, but once you see the power and versatility that's available, you'll be hooked.

To get you started, dBASE for Windows features what Borland calls "two-way tools." These are design modules that automatically generate dBASE code. They now have a two-way capability that changes the interface when you modify the source code. When you display a menu you've created in Borland's traditional design surface, the interface reflects any changes made to the source code. This dynamic operation may turn out to be your best learning tool.

We like the versatility it gives developers, too. You can utilize external VBXs—custom controls for Visual Basic applications—as native controls, in addition to custom controls you create with the dBASE language itself. For easy migration, the Component Builder converts dBASE III Plus and dBASE IV code (in FMT, FRM, and LBL formats) to object code. There's a powerful visual debugger and a preprocessor directive, courtesy of the Borland language group. Data dictionaries, popular on many DBMS design platforms, have also been added. DDE and OLE 1.0 are also supported. A new binary field type lets you embed DDE objects such as bitmap images and WAV files. Overall, there's lots of power here to tempt the dBASE developer with an eye on the future.

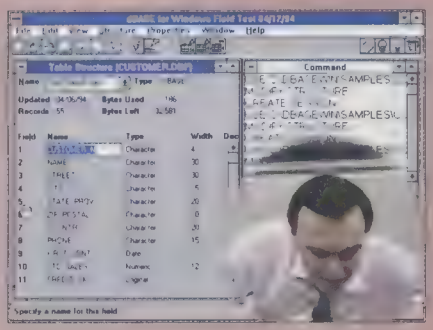
PC USABILITY Tested

How Intuitive Is dBASE Now?

Not completely. Users were frequently frustrated with the beta version—even with icons and pull-down menus. For instance, none of them understood that to create a new icon they needed to click on the **Untitled** box on the Navigator screen. How about labeling it "**Create**"?

Want to **add data** to a file? If there are already records in the file and you double-click on the table's icon, it will open. If there are no records, the icon won't open. We wished for **consistency**. Borland acknowledged these issues, but doesn't plan changes in this release.

Lab Notes: What Our Testers Said about dBASE for Windows

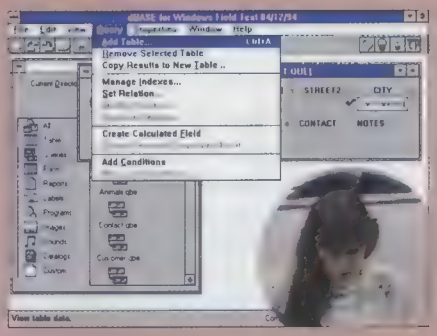


"Hey, I got a hand here. Probably means I can move the field somewhere. Let me see. What do you know, it works!"
DBASE DEVELOPER

"Anytime you create a new item, you should be asked if you want to put that item in a catalog."
SYSTEMS ANALYST

"They should have put an icon here somewhere with a whole list of functions, like date, that I can select."
SENIOR SOFTWARE ENGINEER

"I'm trying to get it to query. Nope. That won't do. Where's that thing?! How can you view the data?"
CAD OPERATOR



How We Tested: dBASE for Windows

To evaluate the new version of dBASE, we brought end users and developers of varying backgrounds and levels of experience into our Usability Labs. Some were very proficient in dBASE and in the dBASE language. Others had experience with other databases such as Microsoft Access, Borland's own Paradox, or Symantec Q&A. Most were comfortable with the Windows environment, while some couldn't even navigate the Help system.

We urged our testers to "think out loud." Some of their "thoughts" appear at left in quotes. We also encouraged them to refer to manuals and online help as much as possible—though not all help files were available in the beta release, and the documentation was in a very preliminary stage.

Each user was given the same assignment:

- Create a table
- Modify the table's structure
- Look up specific records
- Create a report
- Create a catalog

Developers were also asked to create a simple menu.

WORK COMPLETED: *All users created and modified tables easily, but creating queries and reports caused some stumbles.*

STRUGGLES: *Both the Query Designer and the report generator, touted as user-friendly, stumped some testers.*

SATISFACTION: *Developers found dBASE easier than end users did, though the developers used Windows features less.*

PRODUCTIVITY: *This was difficult to quantify because beta documentation (printed and online) was incomplete.*

VERDICT: *Overall, dBASE for Windows is worth the wait, but it does need more expert help for end users.*

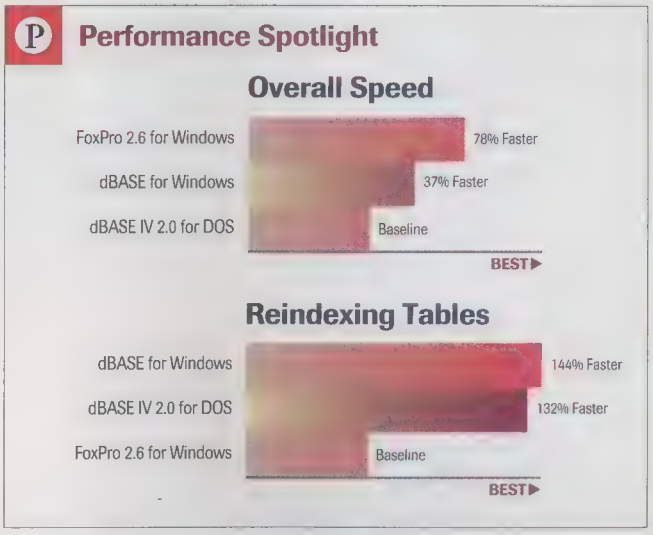
Foxpro 2.6: The One to Beat

FoxPro for Windows is going after the same market Borland hopes to capture: Windows xBASE developers. The difference is that in 18 months FoxPro for Windows has already carved a significant niche, and its followers' ranks are growing. Offering complete dBASE compatibility plus many enhancements— including the proven Rushmore technology for speeding up queries—it's been an appealing option for developers who couldn't wait for Borland's dBASE for Windows. FoxPro 2.6 for Windows (a DOS version is also available) does not offer object-oriented tools, but that's its only drawback—one that's rumored to be corrected sometime this year in Version 3.0. Even so, FoxPro is a solid, time-tested development environment.

New in Version 2.6 for Windows, which was released earlier this year: an AutoMigrate tool for converting dBASE catalogs, reports, forms, tables, and queries; 50 dBASE language extensions; 200 new commands, and 12 Wizards (the counterparts to Borland's Expert concept). There's a powerful menu builder to minimize coding time. SQL access is done through ODBC (dBASE uses IDAPI). There's even a client-server Wizard, dispelling the notion that Wizards are for beginners only. The Professional Edition includes a client-server connectivity kit, a library construction kit (for linking C routines to your FoxPro program), and a distribution kit.

Naysayers claim that FoxPro's functionality is limited because it was ported to Windows, unlike the new version of dBASE, which was rewritten from the ground up. Nonetheless, for the past 18 months FoxPro has been the only Windows game in town, and in the real world, being produced beats being promised.

FoxPro 2.6 for Windows / $495; Developers' Edition, $695 / Microsoft / (800) 426-9400 / (206) 882-8080 / *Circle Reader Service No. 695*



Mixed Results: We used ProCD's Select Phone database of 75,000 records. FoxPro outpaces dBASE in overall performance, but not in reindexing. (Remember, though, we tested a beta version against two mature products.)

Final Analysis: Is This the Upgrade You've Been Waiting For?

1. The **object-oriented development** environment works with a powerful database engine.
2. End users need more **Experts** and **interface consistency** to avoid confusion and frustration.
3. dBASE provides a path to Windows with **backward compatibility** to thousands of applications.

Deciding on dBASE If you're thinking about upgrading to dBASE for Windows, it's no easy decision. If you've been taking advantage of dBASE's low PC processing requirements, you'll need a major hardware upgrade to take advantage of the Windows version. Borland recommends using at least a 386-based PC with 4MB of RAM (we recommend at least 8MB). As for the software cost, Borland has not yet revealed the list price or upgrade price.

Developers will love dBASE for Windows' robust object-oriented capabilities, backward compatibility to hordes of applications, and powerful database engine. Throw in SQL access, and you make the client-server folks very happy.

Experts Needed We're not as confident about users' reactions, however, based on our concerns with the user interface and limited number of Experts. Borland acknowledges these shortcomings, and we'll reserve judgment until we see the shipping version.

Nonetheless, hundreds of thousands of dBASE programs are in active use, and they're in need of ongoing maintenance. Most importantly, many of them are DOS applications running on Windows machines, just begging to be upgraded.

Emotional Baggage To some, dBASE still carries the baggage of buggy releases and broken promises from its Ashton-Tate days. On the other hand, Borland has its fans. Terrance A. Crow, an independent dBASE developer, says, "I'll stick with dBASE because I like Borland's corporate philosophy—they're concerned more with customer satisfaction than with market dominance."

For dBASE developers, the new version is a natural choice for the "check this out" list. It lets them move to object-oriented programming while maintaining compatibility with current programs. Until Microsoft and Computer Associates add similar capabilities to their products later this year, Borland is the only company leading xBASE developers into this new, exciting territory.

dBASE for Windows / Price Not Determined / Borland Int'l / (800) 336-6464 ext. 1203 / (408) 431-1000 / *Circle Reader Service No. 696*

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Advanced Logic Research (800) 444-4257 Fax: (714) 581-9240 Phone tech support: (800) 257-1230 Founded: 1984 *Reader Service No. 701*	Sales: Mon.-Fri. 8 a.m.-5 p.m. (PST). Phone support: Mon.-Fri. 6 a.m.-6 p.m., Sat. 7 a.m.-1 p.m. Online and fax support: 24 hours. CompuServe, BBS: 24 hours.	30-day money back, 15% restocking fee for returns.	5 years parts and labor on system components, 15 months on peripheral parts, 1 year onsite service.	3	4	★★★½ **Extended warranties** and great prices on its line of high-performance PCs make ALR a fierce competitor.
Ambra Computer (800) 252-6272 Fax: (602) 858-2632 Phone tech support: (800) 465-2227 Founded: 1993 *Reader Service No. 702*	Sales: Mon.-Fri. 8 a.m.-11 p.m., Sat.-Sun. 10 a.m.-7 p.m. (EST). Phone support: 24 hours.	30-day money back.	1 year parts and labor off-site, lifetime tech support. Overnight replacement.	3	3.5	★★★½ **One of two** separate divisions with Big Blue backing. Smart pricing and steadfast tech support.
Ares Microdevelopment (800) 322-3200 Fax: (810) 473-4450 Phone tech support: (800) 322-3200 Founded: 1990 *Reader Service No. 703*	Sales: Mon.-Fri. 8 a.m.-11 p.m., Sat. 9 a.m.-6 p.m., Sun. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. (EST). Phone and fax support: 24 hours. Online support: Mon.-Fri. 9 a.m.-6 p.m.	60-day money back.	2 years parts and labor, 1 year onsite service, lifetime tech support. All postage paid for 60 days for returns, exchanges, and replacements.	2.5	4	★★★½ **Proven quality,** reliable support and service, and gutsy price points.
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Austin Direct (800) 752-1577 Fax: (512) 454-1357 Phone tech support: (800) 752-4171 Founded: 1984 *Reader Service No. 706*	Sales: Mon.-Fri. 8 a.m.-6 p.m. (CST). Phone, online, and fax support: 7 days, 6 a.m.-midnight.	30-day money back.	2 years parts and labor, 1 year onsite service, 2 years overnight repair or replacement.	3	3.5	★★★½ **Quality computers** and noteworthy selection.

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CAD Warehouse (800) 487-0485 Fax: (216) 487-0553 Phone tech support: (216) 487-0631 Founded: 1991 *Reader Service No. 708*	Sales: Mon.-Fri. 9 a.m.-6 p.m. (EST). Phone and fax support: Mon.-Fri. 9 a.m.-5:30 p.m.	15% discretionary restocking fee for returns.	Manufacturer's warranty.	2	3	★★½ **CAD expertise** shows. BEST-SELLER: CalComp Drawing Board III $245
Compaq DirectPlus (800) 888-5881 Fax: (713) 374-4025 Phone tech support: (800) 345-1518 Founded: 1982 *Reader Service No. 709*	Sales: Mon.-Fri. 7 a.m.-6 p.m. (CST). Phone, online, and fax support: 24 hours.	30-day money back.	1 year onsite parts and labor, 2 years offsite parts and labor for most products. Postage paid on items returned for repairs.	4	3	★★★½ **Re-energized** company discovers the direct channel to deliver Compaq quality at mail-order prices. BEST-SELLER: 4/33SX ProLinea Productivity Paq $1,649
CompuAdd Computer (800) 627-1961; (512) 250-1489 Fax: (512) 331-2862 Phone tech support: (800) 999-9901 Founded: 1982 *Reader Service No. 710*	Sales: Mon.-Fri. 7 a.m.-7 p.m. (CST). Phone support: Mon.-Fri. 7 a.m.-10 p.m. Online and fax support: Mon.-Fri. 7 a.m.-5 p.m. BBS: 24 hours.	30-day money back.	1 year onsite parts and labor (return postage paid), and 24- to 48-hour replacement (postage paid both ways), lifetime tech support.	4	4	★★★★ **This OEM** ranks high on service and selection, and fulfills its motto "Satisfaction guaranteed." BEST-SELLER: C466D Desktop $2,195
CompuClassics (800) 733-3888 Fax: (818) 734-3999 Founded: 1984 *Reader Service No. 711*	Sales: Mon.-Fri. 7 a.m.-6 p.m., Sat. 9 a.m.-2 p.m. (PST).	15% discretionary restocking fee for returns.	Manufacturer's warranty.	1	3	★★ **Fast, friendly** service with a healthy pick of products. BEST-SELLER: Microsoft Office 4.2 upgrade $285
CompUSA-Direct (800) 266-7872 Fax: (214) 888-5743 Phone tech support: (800) 382-8324 Founded: 1986 *Reader Service No. 712*	Sales: 24 hours. Phone support: Mon.-Fri. 7 a.m.-9 p.m. (CST). Online support: Mon.-Fri. 8 a.m.-8 p.m.	30-day money back, except on certain software. No refunds after 30 days unless defective.	1 year onsite parts, labor, overnight replacement. Postage paid on overnight replacements and defective returns.	4	2.5	★★★½ **The warehouse** wonder has a direct side, too. Keep your eye on this one! BEST-SELLER: Toshiba 1910 notebook $1,399
ComputAbility Consumer Electronics (800) 558-0003 Fax: (414) 357-7814 Phone tech support: (800) 558-0003 Founded: 1982 *Reader Service No. 713*	Sales: Mon.-Fri. 8 a.m.-8 p.m., Sat. 9 a.m.-5 p.m. (CST). Phone support: Mon.-Fri. 1 p.m.-5 p.m. Fax support: Mon.-Fri. 9 a.m.-5 p.m.	30-day exchange for defective items, 5% restocking fee for refunds.	Manufacturer's warranty. Postage paid for exchange of defective items.	2.5	2	★★½ **A dozen years** have honed its dedication to variety and price sensitivity. BEST-SELLER: NEC 3Xi CD-ROM drive $423

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Direct 60 Best Sources for Selection, Service, and Price

Company	Hours	Guarantees	Warranties	Sales/Service Rating	Guarantee/Warranty Rating	Overall Rating/Comments
Computer Discount Warehouse (800) 800-4239 Fax: (708) 465-6800 Phone tech support: (800) 383-4239 Founded: 1983 *Reader Service No. 714*	Sales: Mon.-Fri. 7 a.m.-9 p.m., Sat. 9 a.m.-5 p.m. (CST). Phone support: Mon.-Fri. 8 a.m.-9 p.m., Sat. 9 a.m.-5 p.m.	30-day money back, variable restocking fee for items returned incomplete.	Onsite parts and labor, some overnight replacement. Pays overnight postage on replacements, defect returns, some exchanges.	2.5	4.5	★★★½ BEST-SELLER: U.S. Robotics Sportster 14.4 external modem w/fax $139.50 **Simple and true:** great prices, great selection.
Computerware Direct (800) 988-7770 Fax: (215) 788-6589 Phone tech support: (215) 788-3939 Founded: 1982 *Reader Service No. 715*	Sales: Mon.-Fri. 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m. (EST). Phone, online, and fax support: Mon.-Fri. 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.	7-day money back, variable restocking fee for returned special orders.	Manufacturer's warranty. Postage paid for returns, replacements, and exchanges.	3	3	★★★ BEST-SELLER: Hewlett-Packard InkJet 520 $285 **This well-trained** sales team will work hard to accommodate a customer.
Comtrade (800) 969-2123 Fax: (818) 369-1479 Phone tech support: (800) 899-4508 Founded: 1987 *Reader Service No. 716*	Sales: Mon.-Fri. 7 a.m.-7 p.m., Sat. 9 a.m.-6 p.m. (PST). Phone support: Mon.-Fri. 7 a.m.-7 p.m.	30-day money back.	3 years parts and labor, 1 year onsite service, 30 days overnight replacement.	1.5	2.5	★½ BEST-SELLER: VL-Bus BestBuy 66MHz 486 $1,695 **Powerful products** put this small company in the big leagues.
Cornell Computer Systems (800) 886-7200 Fax: (909) 594-9995 Phone tech support: (800) 886-7279 Founded: 1991 *Reader Service No. 717*	Sales: Mon.-Sat. 7 a.m.-7 p.m. (PST). Phone support: Mon.-Sat. 8 a.m.-6 p.m. Online support: 24 hours.	30-day money back.	3 years parts and labor, 3 years overnight replacement, 1 year onsite service.	4	3	★★★½ BEST-SELLER: 66MHz 486DX2 Power Pak $2,695 **Solid systems** at make-the-sale prices.
DECdirect (Digital Equipment Corp.) (800) 344-4825 Fax: (800) 234-2298 Phone tech support: (800) 344-4825 Founded: 1976 *Reader Service No. 718*	Sales: 24 hours. Phone, online and fax support: 24 hours.	Unlimited money back.	3 years parts and labor, 1 year onsite service, immediate pick-up and 2-day repair/replacement (notebooks only).	5	4	★★★★½ BEST-SELLER: DECpc LPv 4/33DX $1,399 without monitor **Big iron** with long direct track record goes PC. A heck of a support network and huge field service staff.
Dell Computer Corp. (800) 289-3355 Fax: (512) 728-3653 Phone tech support: (800) 624-9896 Founded: 1984 *Reader Service No. 719*	Sales: Mon.-Fri. 7 a.m.-9 p.m., Sat. 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Sun. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. (CST). Phone and fax support: 24 hours. Online support: during business hours. BBS: 24 hours.	30-day money back, 5-minute tech support response.	Parts and labor, onsite service, overnight replacement (length varies depending on system).	4	5	★★★★½ BEST-SELLER: Dell Dimension XPS P60 $2,599 **Best and brightest** sets the standard. One-stop shopping is a bonus. Tech support guarantee.
Dirt Cheap Drives (800) 473-0960 Fax: (713) 333-2033 Phone tech support: (713) 333-2099 Founded: 1988 *Reader Service No. 720*	Sales: Mon.-Fri. 8 a.m.-7 p.m., Sat. 9 a.m.-3 p.m. (CST). Phone support: Mon.-Fri. 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Fax support: 24 hours.	30-day money back, 15% restocking fee for returns.	Manufacturer's warranty.	2	3	★★½ BEST-SELLER: Maxtor M7546A $388 **The name** says it all. Buying a hard drive? Call here first.

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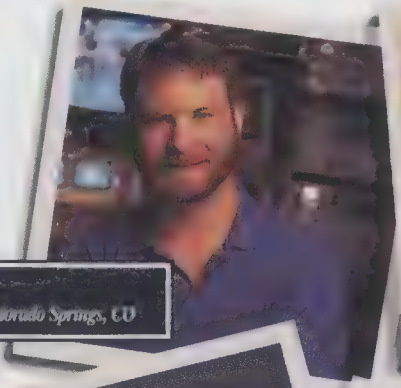

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Video Producer, Colorado Springs, CO

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Psychiatric Management, San Diego, CA

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Craig Trible
Dairy Business Operator, Troy, VT

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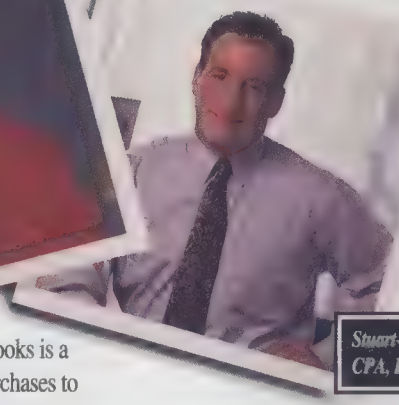

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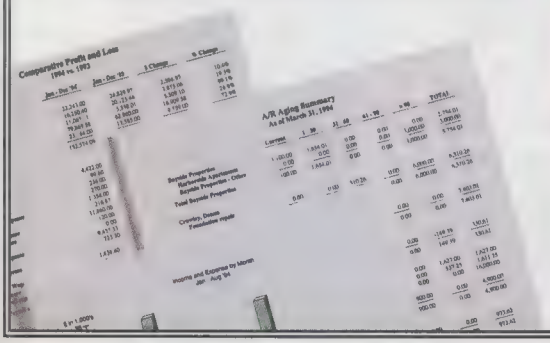

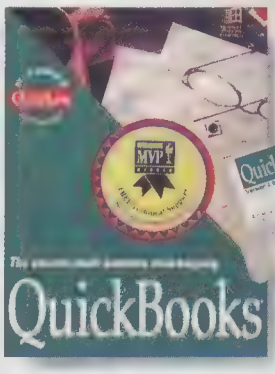

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Company	Hours	Guarantees	Warranties	Sales/Service Rating	Guarantee/Warranty Rating	Overall Rating/Comments
Drake Int'l (800) 244-7800 Fax: (602) 820-1681 Phone tech support: (800) 997-3287 Founded: 1987 *Reader Service No. 721*	Sales: Mon.-Fri. 6 a.m.-7 p.m. (MST). Phone support: Mon.-Fri. 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Sat. 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Online support: 24 hours.	30-day money back.	3 years parts and labor; lifetime free tech support; Drake pays postage for 2-day replacements for up to 3 years.	2.5	3.5	★★★ **Name-brand** products at non–name-brand prices is the focus here.
Dustin Discount Software (800) 274-6611 Fax: (818) 772-7790 Founded: 1987 *Reader Service No. 722*	Sales: Mon.-Fri. 6 a.m.-6 p.m., Sat. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. (PST).	15% restocking fee, plus possible $5 shipping reimbursement fee for returns.	Manufacturer's warranty. Dustin pays postage for ground delivery.	1.5	2	★★ **First-class** software selection. No tech support—these folks specialize in pricing and delivery.
Empac Int'l (510) 683-8800 Fax: (510) 683-8662 Phone tech support: (510) 226-4752 Founded: 1985 *Reader Service No. 723*	Sales: Mon.-Fri. 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m. (PST). Phone support: Mon.-Fri. 9 a.m.-5 p.m.	30-day money back, 15% restocking fee for returns.	1 year parts and labor.	1.5	2	★★ **Broad selection** at attractive prices.
Envisions Solutions Technology (800) 365-7226 Fax: (415) 692-9064 Phone tech support: (415) 692-9067 Founded: 1989 *Reader Service No. 724*	Sales: Mon.-Fri. 6:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m., Sat. 9 a.m.-1 p.m. (PST). Phone and fax support: Mon.-Fri. 7 a.m.-5 p.m. Online support: 24 hours.	30-day money back, 15% restocking fee for returns.	1 year parts and labor. Envisions pays postage on 10-day turnaround warranty replacements.	3	3.5	★★★½ **Expert desktop** publishing advice and focused product selection.
EPS Technologies (800) 447-0921 Fax: (605) 966-5482 Phone tech support: (800) 526-4258 Founded: 1989 *Reader Service No. 725*	Sales: Mon.-Fri. 7 a.m.-7 p.m., Sat. 9 a.m.-3 p.m. (CST). Phone, online, and fax support: Mon.-Fri. 7 a.m.-7 p.m., Sat. 9 a.m.-3 p.m.	60-day money back, no restocking fee within 60 days.	3 years parts, 1 year labor, onsite service; lifetime toll-free tech support; some overnight replacement.	3.5	4	★★★★ **Quality computers** at a good price. Bonanza selection of CD-ROM titles.
Epson Direct (800) 374-7300 Fax: (310) 782-4455 Phone tech support: (800) 289-3776 Founded: 1993	Sales: Mon.-Fri. 6 a.m.-6 p.m. (PST). Phone and online support: Mon.-Fri. 6 a.m.-6 p.m. (EST). Fax and BBS support: 24 hours.	30-day money back.	1 year parts and labor, onsite service, and overnight replacement. One-way postage paid on returns, exchanges, and replacements.	4	3.5	★★★★ **Reputable name** and service, 100 people on tech support.
First Source Int'l (800) 535-5892 Fax: (714) 448-7760 Phone tech support: (800) 535-5892 Founded: 1989 *Reader Service No. 727*	Sales: Mon.-Sat. 7 a.m.-5 p.m. (PST). Phone and fax support: Mon.-Fri. 7 a.m.-4 p.m.	30-day money back, 20% restocking fee for returns made after 30 days.	Lifetime parts and labor on all memory products. Postage paid for overnight replacement.	3.5	3.5	★★★½ **Memory product** extravaganza with a good track record.

BEST-SELLER: 66MHz DX2 multimedia desktop $1,799

BEST-SELLER: Microsoft Office 4.2 competitive upgrade $265

BEST-SELLER: 33MHz 486 system $1,250

BEST-SELLER: ENV6100 scanner $499

BEST-SELLER: Not available

BEST-SELLER: ActionNote 500C notebook $2,199

BEST-SELLER: 1X9-70 SIMM $43

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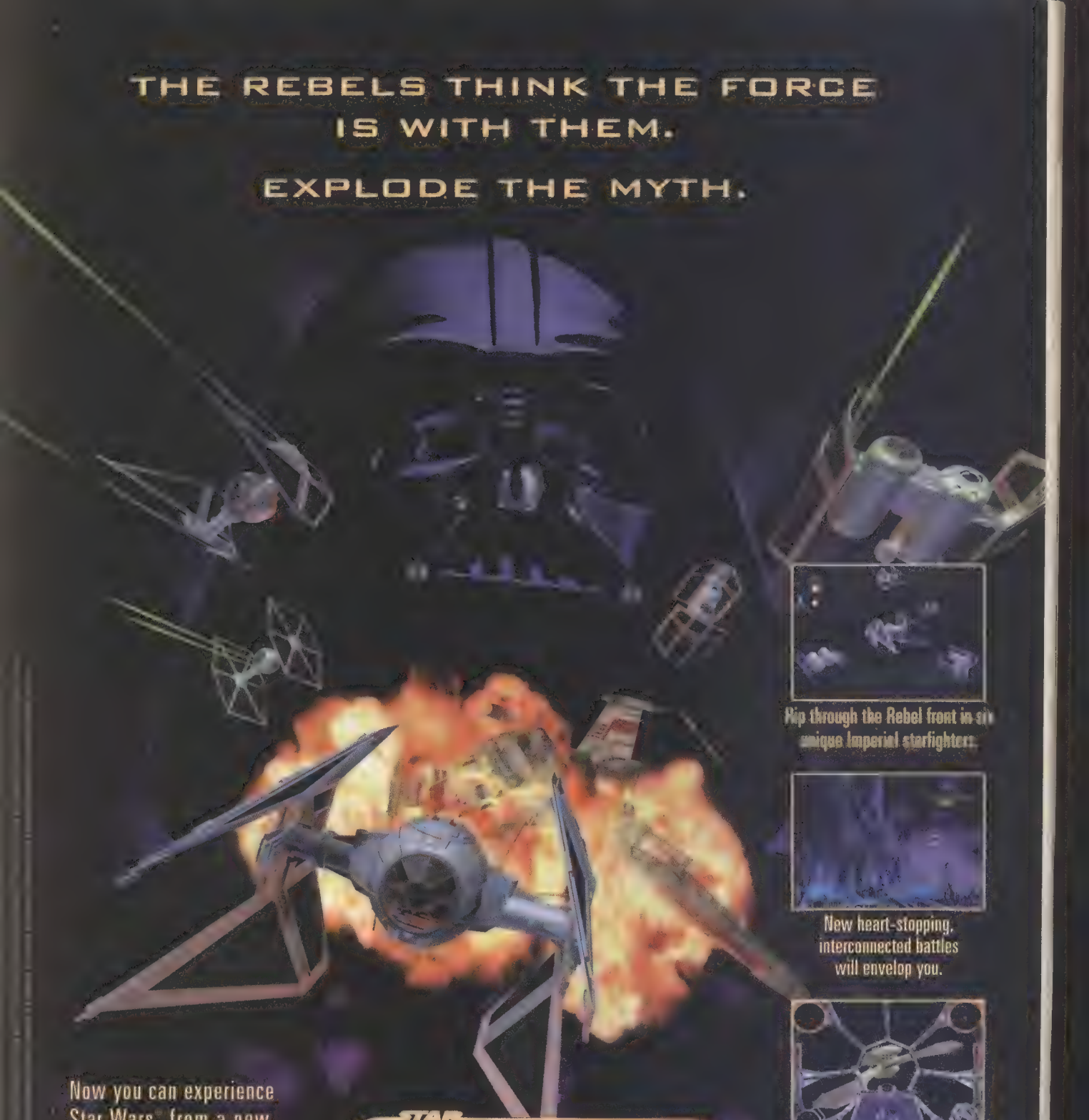

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Company	Hours	Guarantees	Warranties	Sales/Service Rating	Guarantee/Warranty Rating	Overall Rating/Comments
Gateway 2000 (800) 846-2000 Fax: (605) 232-2023 Phone tech support: (800) 846-2000 Founded: 1985 *Reader Service No. 728*	Sales: Mon.-Fri. 7 a.m.-10 p.m., Sat. 9 a.m.-4 p.m. (CST). Phone support: Mon.-Fri. 6 a.m.-midnight, Sat. 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Online and fax support: 24 hours.	30-day money back.	1 year parts and labor, onsite service. Postage paid for overnight replacement.	2.5	3.5	★★★ **First-rate** computers and cut-rate prices.
				BEST-SELLER: 66MHz 486DX2 P4D-66 PC $2,295		
Harmony Computers (800) 441-1144 Fax: (718) 692-4535 Phone tech support: (718) 692-2828 Founded: 1981 *Reader Service No. 729*	Sales: Mon.-Thu. 9 a.m.-6 p.m., Fri. 9 a.m.-2 p.m., Sun. 10:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. (EST). Phone and fax support: during business hours.	7-day money back, 5 to 15% restocking fee for most returns except defective items.	90 days parts and labor, 7 days overnight replacement, lifetime tech support.	3	1	★★ **Friendly service** with decent prices.
				BEST-SELLER: Canon BJC-600 $559		
Hi-Tech USA (800) 831-2888 Fax: (408) 262-8772 Phone tech support: (408) 956-8285 Founded: 1989 *Reader Service No. 730*	Sales: Mon.-Fri. 8 a.m.-6 p.m., Sat. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. (PST). Phone and fax support: Mon.-Fri. 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Sat. 10 a.m.-3 p.m.	30-day money back, 15% restocking fee for returns made within 30 days.	1 year parts and labor for systems, 6 months parts and labor for components.	2.5	1.5	★★ **Fair deals** and a smart staff distinguish this company.
				BEST-SELLER: Not available		
IBM PC Direct (800) 426-2968 Fax: (919) 517-2050 Phone tech support: (800) 772-2227 Founded: 1992 *Reader Service No. 731*	Sales: Mon.-Fri. 8 a.m.-10 p.m., Sat. 9 a.m.-5 p.m. (EST). Phone, online, and fax support: 24 hours.	30-day money back.	Up to 3 years parts and labor (varies by product). Postage paid for returns, replacements, and exchanges.	3.5	4	★★★★ **Big Blue's** other direct channel. Committed to good deals on good products.
				BEST-SELLER: ValuePoint 433DX $1,610		
Inmac (800) 547-5444 Fax: (800) 972-3210 Phone tech support: (800) 972-9233 Founded: 1977 *Reader Service No. 732*	Sales: Mon.-Fri. 6:30 a.m.-7:30 p.m., Sat. 7:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. (CST). Phone and fax support: 24 hours. BBS: 24 hours.	10% restocking fee on returns for 30 to 59 days, 15% 60 to 120 days after purchase.	1 year onsite service. Postage paid for exchanges, replacements, and overnight replacements.	4	2.5	★★★½ **Built-to-order** systems are a specialty.
				BEST-SELLER: 466MVP $2,549		
Insight Direct (800) 755-3875 Fax: (602) 902-1180 Phone tech support: (800) 377-3000 Founded: 1986 *Reader Service No. 733*	Sales: 24 hours. Phone support: Mon.-Thu. 6 a.m.-9 p.m., Fri. 6 a.m.-8 p.m., Sat. 6 a.m.-6 p.m., Sun. 8 a.m.-4 p.m. (PST). Online and fax support: 24 hours.	30-day money back.	1 year parts and labor, onsite service for local sales, some overnight replacement, lifetime tech support.	4.5	3.5	★★★★ **Committed to service.** Well-trained salespeople can handle most tech support questions.
				BEST-SELLER: Insight PCI P60 basic $1,799		
Keydata Int'l (800) 486-4800 Fax: (908) 756-7359 Phone tech support: (800) 486-9100 Founded: 1990 *Reader Service No. 734*	Sales: Mon.-Fri. 9 a.m.-7 p.m., Sat. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. (EST). Phone support: Mon.-Fri. 9 a.m.-7 p.m., Sat. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Fax support: 24 hours.	30-day money back, 10% restocking fee for returns.	1 year parts and labor, lifetime tech support.	3	2.5	★★★ **Notebooks expert** backs products with strong support.
				BEST-SELLER: Keynote Commander $1,775		

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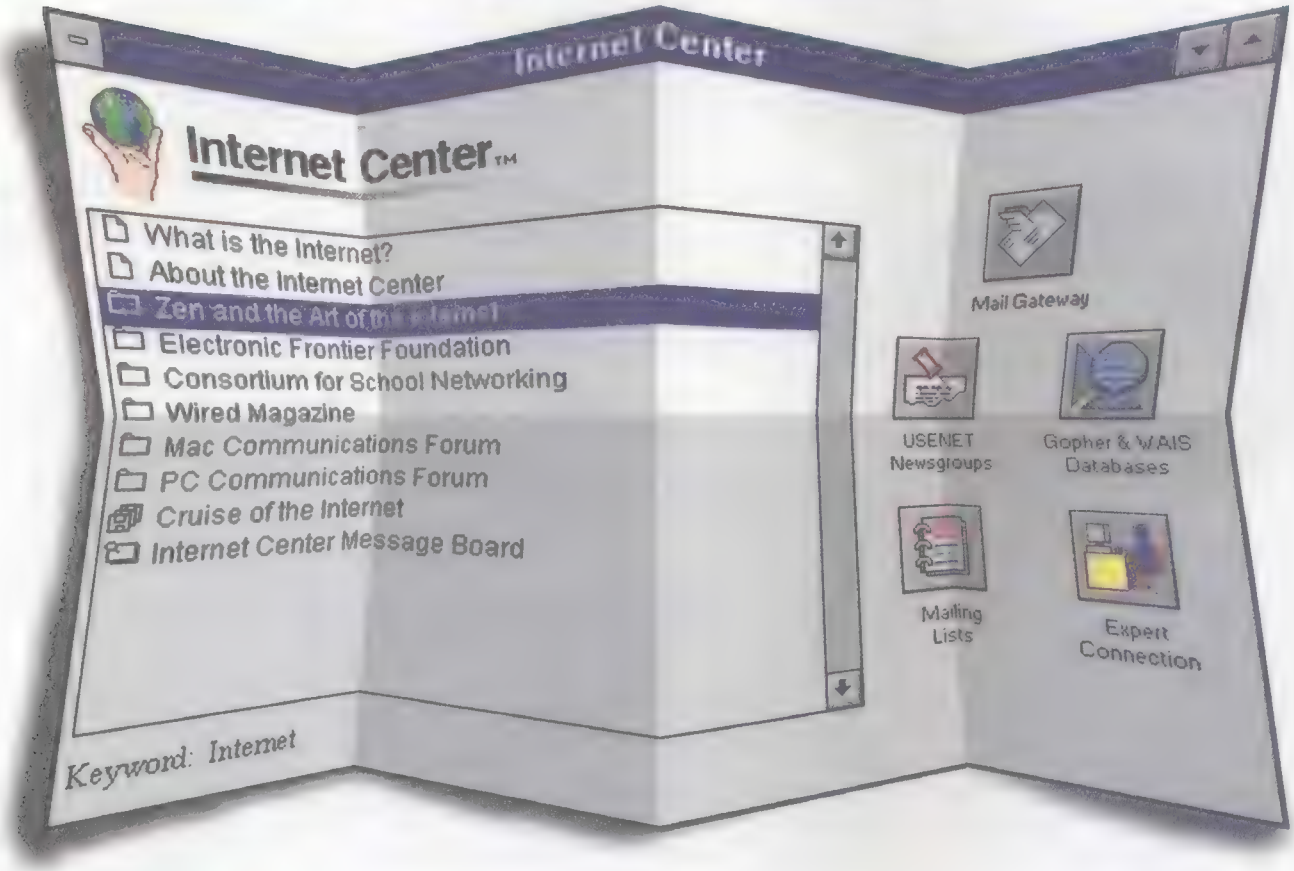

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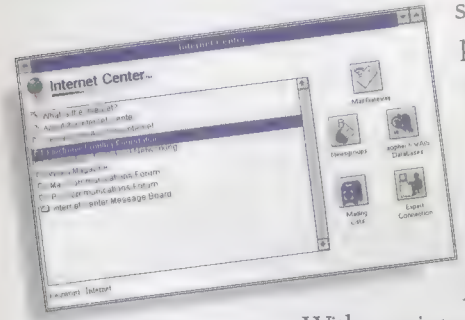

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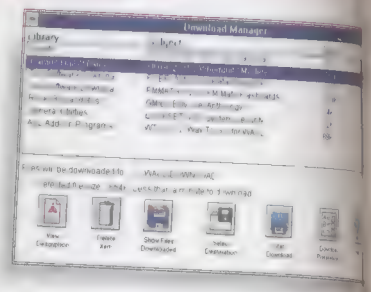

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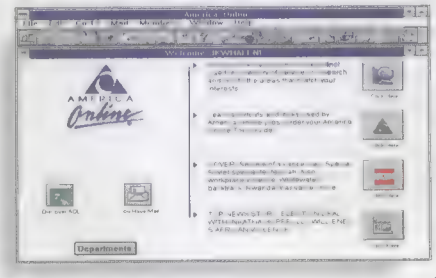

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Company	Hours	Guarantees	Warranties	Sales/Service Rating	Guarantee/Warranty Rating	Overall Rating/Comments
Maximus Computers (800) 394-6299 Fax: (818) 357-9140 Phone tech support: (800) 899-0142 Founded: 1991 *Reader Service No. 735*	Sales: Mon.-Fri. 7 a.m.-7 p.m., Sat. 9 a.m.-5 p.m. (PST). Phone support: Mon.-Fri. 9 a.m.-6 p.m., Sat. 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Online support: 24 hours. Fax support: Mon.-Sat. 9 a.m.-6 p.m.	30-day money back.	3 years parts, lifetime labor, 1 year onsite service. Postage paid for returns, exchanges, and replacements within 30 days.	3.5	4.5	★★★★ BEST-SELLER: Mega-Media Pro Pentium 60 $2,845 **Multimedia** at cheap prices: Maximus's strategy is paying off.
MegaHaus (800) 786-1187 Fax: (713) 333-3024 Phone tech support: (713) 333-1944 Founded: 1987 *Reader Service No. 736*	Sales: Mon.-Fri. 8 a.m.-7 p.m., Sat. 9 a.m.-3 p.m. (CST). Phone support: Mon.-Fri. 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Fax support: 24 hours.	15% restocking fee for full-refund returns.	At least 1 year parts and labor, terms vary by product.	1	0.5	★ BEST-SELLER: Iomega Tape 250 tape drive $159 **Hard-drive kingpin,** always competitively priced. Good selection on storage and peripherals.
Micron Computer (800) 515-9197 Fax: (208) 465-3424 Phone tech support: (800) 877-8856 Founded: 1992 *Reader Service No. 737*	Sales: Mon.-Fri. 7 a.m.-8 p.m., Sat. 8 a.m.-5 p.m. (MST). Phone and fax support: during business hours.	30-day money back.	1 year parts and labor, onsite service; lifetime tech support. Postage paid for overnight replacement.	2.5	3.5	★★★ BEST-SELLER: Magnum Series PCs $2,000 to $5,000 **An innovation leader** with consistently solid products and prices.
MicroProfessionals (800) 800-8300 Fax: (708) 339-8333 Phone tech support: (800) 800-8308 Founded: 1984 *Reader Service No. 738*	Sales: Mon.-Fri. 8 a.m.-7 p.m., Sat. 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m. (CST). Phone and fax support: Mon.-Fri. 8 a.m.-6 p.m.	30-day money back.	1 year parts and labor, onsite service, and overnight replacement. Postage paid for overnight replacement.	3.5	3.5	★★★½ BEST-SELLER: 66MHz 486DX desktop $1,799 **The Jimmy Stewart** of the Direct 60: Decent products, decent prices, a decent company.
Micro Warehouse (800) 367-7080 Fax: (908) 905-5245 Phone tech support: (800) 367-7080 Founded: 1987 *Reader Service No. 739*	Sales: 24 hours. Phone support: Mon.-Fri. 8 a.m.-midnight, Sat. 9 a.m.-5 p.m. (EST). Fax support: 24 hours.	Money back on certain items.	Manufacturer's warranty, overnight replacement. Postage paid for returns or exchanges of defective products.	4	3.5	★★★★ BEST-SELLER: Not available **Great prices** and variety.
Midwest Computer Works (800) 659-6757 Fax: (708) 459-6933 Phone tech support: (708) 459-9410 Founded: 1988 *Reader Service No. 740*	Sales: Mon.-Fri. 8 a.m.-7 p.m. (CST). Phone and fax support: Mon.-Fri. 8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.	10-day money back.	Manufacturer's warranty.	3	3	★★★ BEST-SELLER: Sony GDM-17SE1 17-inch monitor $1,099 **Wide selection** and quick delivery are this company's stock in trade.
MidWest Micro (800) 682-7248 Fax: (800) 562-6622 Phone tech support: (800) 262-6622 Founded: 1982 *Reader Service No. 741*	Sales: Mon.-Fri. 9 a.m.-7 p.m., Sat. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. (EST). Phone support: Mon.-Fri. 9 a.m.-7 p.m., Sat. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Online support: Mon.-Fri. 9 a.m.-7 p.m. Fax support: during business hours.	30-day money back, variable restocking fee for some returns.	Manufacturer's warranty. Postage paid for overnight replacement.	4	3.5	★★★★ BEST-SELLER: Infotel 14.4 fax modem $89 **Product variety** and competitive pricing backed by some of the friendliest service around.

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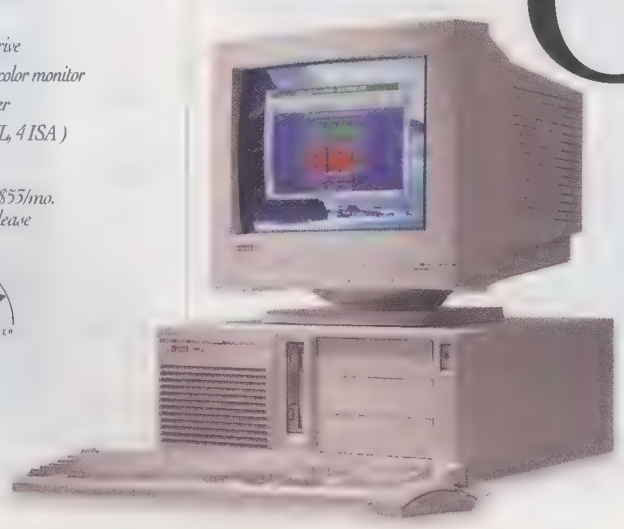

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Company	Hours	Guarantees	Warranties	Sales/Service Rating	Guarantee/Warranty Rating	Overall Rating/Comments
NEC Select (800) 374-8000 Fax: (508) 264-8831 Phone tech support: (800) 388-8888 Founded: 1992 *Reader Service No. 742*	Sales: Mon.-Fri. 8:30 a.m.-8:00 p.m. (EST). Phone support: Mon.-Fri. 8:30 a.m.-8:00 p.m. Online and fax support: 24 hours.	30-day money back.	Up to 3 years parts and labor, 1 year onsite service. Postage paid for one-way, 2-day shipments.	3.5	3	★★★½ **An improving member** of the old guard goes direct. BEST-SELLER: Image 486es $2,440
Northgate Computer Systems (800) 548-1993 Fax: (612) 361-5095 Phone tech support: (800) 446-5037 Founded: 1987 *Reader Service No. 743*	Sales: Mon.-Fri. 7 a.m.-7 p.m. (CST). Phone and online support: 24 hours. CompuServe, BBS: 24 hours.	30-day money back.	1 year parts and labor, onsite service, and overnight replacement. Postage paid for overnight replacement.	3.5	2.5	★★★ **Reputable products** at pleasing prices. Northgate is big and well-known for good reason. BEST-SELLER: Superb Energy Star System $999
PCs Compleat (800) 669-4727 Fax: (800) 669-8329 Phone tech support: (800) 697-4727 Founded: 1991 *Reader Service No. 744*	Sales: Mon.-Fri. 24 hours, Sat.-Sun. 10 a.m.-8 p.m. (EST). Phone and online support: Mon.-Fri. 9 a.m.-9 p.m.	30-day lowest price, money back. Same-day shipping. Installed software discount.	30 days overnight replacement, manufacturer's warranty, lifetime support. Postage paid for defect returns or exchanges.	4.5	4	★★★★½ **Makes customer** satisfaction smart business; discounts if PCs Compleat installs software. BEST-SELLER: Toshiba T4700CT notebook $4,949
PC Connection (800) 800-0005 Fax: (603) 446-7791 Phone tech support: (800) 722-8324 Founded: 1982 *Reader Service No. 745*	Sales: 24 hours, except Sun. 5 p.m.-Mon. 8 a.m. (EST). Phone support: Mon.-Fri. 9 a.m.-7:30 p.m.	60-day money back, no restocking fee if item is returned complete.	120 days parts and labor, onsite service for some systems, overnight replacement. Postage paid for exchanges.	3.5	3	★★★½ **Reliable service,** and most salespeople can answer tech questions. BEST-SELLER: Microsoft Windows for Workgroups Add On $47.95
PC Zone (800) 258-2088 Fax: (206) 881-3421 Phone tech support: (800) 258-2088 Founded: 1986 *Reader Service No. 746*	Sales: Mon.-Fri. 5 a.m.-11 p.m., Sat. 5 a.m.-8 p.m., Sun. 6 a.m.-8 p.m. (PST). Phone, online, and fax support: Mon.-Fri. 8 a.m.-6 p.m.	30-day money back, up to 120 days replacement for defective products.	Postage paid for overnight replacement of defective products.	3	2	★½ **A terrific mix** of product and price points. BEST-SELLER: Microsoft Office Version 4.2 $468.98
Publishing Perfection (800) 782-5974 Fax: (414) 252-9120 Phone tech support (414) 252-5000 Founded: 1987 *Reader Service No. 747*	Sales: Mon.-Sat. 9 a.m.-5 p.m. (CST). Phone support: Mon.-Fri. 8 a.m.-5 p.m.	30-day money back on hardware, 15% restocking fee for returns.	Manufacturer's warranty. One-way postage paid for replacement and exchange of defective products.	2	3.5	★★★ **Experts on** printers, scanners, and multimedia. BEST-SELLER: LaserPix 2,400-dpi LaserJet 4 upgrade $1,199
Quantex Microsystems (800) 288-0566 Fax: (908) 563-0407 Phone tech support: (800) 288-0566 Founded: 1984 *Reader Service No. 748*	Sales: Mon.-Thu. 9 a.m.-9 p.m., Fri. 9 a.m.-6 p.m., Sat. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. (EST). Phone and fax support: Mon.-Thu. 9 a.m.-9 p.m., Fri. 9 a.m.-6 p.m.	30-day money back, no restocking fee for returns made within 30 days.	1 year parts and labor, onsite service, overnight replacement; lifetime tech support. All postage paid.	3.5	4	★★★★ **Excellent bet** for high-end systems. BEST-SELLER: Q486DX2/66MM-4 system $2,095

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Company	Hours	Guarantees	Warranties	Sales/Service Rating	Guarantee/Warranty Rating	Overall Rating/Comments
Royal Electronics (800) 486-0008 Fax: (818) 330-2717 Phone tech support: (800) 486-2708 Founded: 1988 *Reader Service No. 749*	Sales: Mon.-Sat. 7 a.m.-7 p.m. (PST). Phone and fax support: Mon.-Sat. 9 a.m.-5 p.m.	30-day money back.	3 years parts and labor.	2	2	★★ **Dependable desktop** deal-makers.
Sager Midern Computer (800) 669-1624 Fax: (818) 964-2381 Phone tech support: (800) 669-1624 Founded: 1985 *Reader Service No. 750*	Sales: Mon.-Fri. 7 a.m.-6 p.m., Sat. 9 a.m.-3 p.m. (PST). Phone and fax support: Mon.-Fri. 8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.	30-day money back, no restocking fee for returns made within 30 days.	1 year parts and labor, 30 days overnight replacement for defectives only. All return postage paid.	3.5	3.5	★★★½ **Notebooks kingpin** delivers quality with good prices.
Surplus Software Int'l (800) 753-7877 Fax: (503) 386-4227 Phone tech support: (800) 753-7877 Founded: 1992 *Reader Service No. 751*	Sales: Mon.-Fri. 7 a.m.-5 p.m. (PST). Phone and fax support: Mon.-Fri. 7 a.m.-5 p.m.	30-day satisfaction guaranteed.	Manufacturer's warranty. Overnight replacement. Surplus pays postage for all replacements.	3	4.5	★★★★ **Discontinued products** at bargain pricing.
Swan Technologies (800) 468-9044 Fax: (814) 237-6136 Phone tech support: (800) 468-7926 Founded: 1984 *Reader Service No. 752*	Sales: Mon.-Fri. 8 a.m.-8 p.m. (EST). Phone support: Mon.-Fri. 9 a.m.-9 p.m., Sat.-Sun. 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Online support: 24 hours.	30-day money back.	1 year parts, labor, onsite service, tech support, overnight replacement. Swan pays postage on all replacements and exchanges.	4	2.5	★★★½ **Solid prices** all around, but look for special deals in networking products.
TC Computers/Treasure Chest Peripherals (800) 723-8282 Fax: (504) 461-8095 Phone tech support: (800) 723-6380 Founded: 1986 *Reader Service No. 753*	Sales: Mon.-Sat. 8 a.m.-8 p.m. (CST). Phone, online, and fax support: Mon.-Fri. 8 a.m.-8 p.m., Sat. 10 a.m.-4 p.m.	30-day money back.	1 year (peripherals) to 2 years (systems) parts and overnight replacement; lifetime labor and tech support.	3.5	3.5	★★★½ **Growing computer** maker and peripheral seller offers laudable products at fair prices.
Tri-Star Computer Corp. (800) 800-7668 Fax: (602) 731-4979 Phone tech support: (800) 800-2690 Founded: 1987 *Reader Service No. 754*	Sales: Mon.-Fri. 7 a.m.-6 p.m. (PST). Phone support: Mon.-Fri. 7 a.m.-6 p.m. Online support: 24 hours.	30-day money back.	2 years parts and labor, 1 year onsite service and overnight replacement.	4	4	★★★★ **CAD computer** specialists deliver high-caliber computers.
USA Flex (800) 872-3539 Fax: (708) 351-7204 Phone tech support: (800) 955-1488 Founded: 1977 *Reader Service No. 755*	Sales: 24 hours. Phone support: 24 hours. Fax support: Mon.-Fri. 8 a.m.-6 p.m. (CST).	Money back (length varies by product), 20% restocking fee for some returns.	3 years parts, 1 year labor, 2 years onsite service, lifetime support, replace defective peripherals overnight.	4.5	4	★★★★½ **One-stop shopping** with good pricing.

BEST-SELLER: Royal Ultra Media $4,595

BEST-SELLER: NP843D 33MHz 486DX $2,420

BEST-SELLER: Check-It 3.0 $19.95

BEST-SELLER: Swan Performance 66MHz 486DX2 $2,049

BEST-SELLER: VL-Bus mother-board $739 Intel, or $689 AMD

BEST-SELLER: Tri-CAD P5 PCI Station $3,795

BEST-SELLER: Sony CD-ROM drive with Sound Blaster 16 $299

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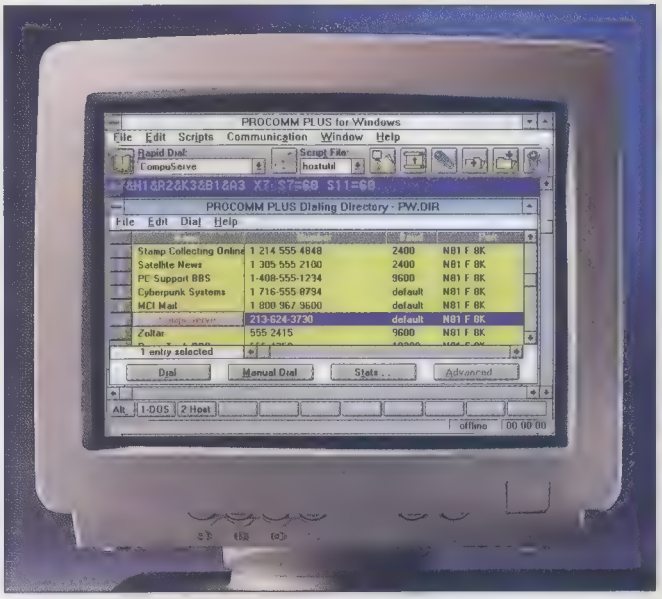

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Phonebook	Customizable	Fixed
Split-screen session window	Yes	No
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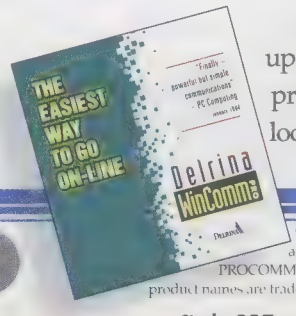

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Best Sources for Selection, Service, and Price

Company	Hours	Guarantees	Warranties	Sales/Service Rating	Guarantee/Warranty Rating	Overall Rating/Comments
VTech Computers (800) 819-0070 Fax: (800) 947-3976 Phone tech support: (800) 964-3976 Founded: 1976 *Reader Service No. 756*	Sales: Mon.-Fri. 7 a.m.-8:30 p.m., Sat. 9 a.m.-6 p.m., Sun. 10 a.m.-3 p.m. (CST). Phone, online, and fax support: Mon.-Fri. 8 a.m.-7 p.m., Sat. 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Sun. 11 a.m.-3 p.m.	30-day money back, no restocking fee for returns made within 30 days.	3 years parts, labor, and overnight replacement; 1 year onsite service; lifetime tech support. Postage paid for returns.	3.5	4	BEST-SELLER: Expo 66MHz 486DX2 system $2,199	★★★★ **Serious systems** and bare-knuckles pricing make VTech the best thing from Illinois farm country since the McCormick reaper.
Zenith Data Systems (800) 582-0524 Fax: (800) 472-7211 Phone tech support: (800) 227-3360 Founded: 1992 *Reader Service No. 757*	Sales: Mon.-Fri. 7 a.m.-7 p.m. (CST). Phone support: Mon.-Fri. 7 a.m.-7 p.m. Fax support: during business hours. BBS support: 24 hours.	30-day money back.	1 to 3 years onsite parts and labor, 24-hour exchange for notebooks.	3.5	3.5	BEST-SELLER: Z-Lite 425L $1,599	★★★½ **Maintaining high** standards in the midst of change.
Zenon Technology (800) 899-6119 Fax: (818) 935-1826 Phone tech support: (800) 299-7898 Founded: 1990 *Reader Service No. 758*	Sales: Mon.-Fri. 7 a.m.-7 p.m., Sat. 9 a.m.-5 p.m. (PST). Phone support: Mon.-Fri. 7 a.m.-7 p.m., Sat. 9 a.m.-5 p.m.	30-day money back.	3 years parts and labor; overnight replacement.	2.5	3.5	BEST-SELLER: Z-Optimus II PCI $3,799	★★★ **Strong warranty** policies make this company a player.
Zeos Int'l (800) 554-5218 Fax: (800) 362-1205 Phone tech support: (800) 228-5390 Founded: 1981 *Reader Service No. 759*	Sales: 24 hours. Phone, online, and fax support: 24 hours.	30-day money back.	1 year parts and service, onsite service; lifetime technical support; overnight replacement.	5	3.5	BEST-SELLER: Zeos Pantera 90 $2,595	★★★★½ **Quality computers** and support. Stumbling in the early 90s, Zeos has resurfaced as a champion contender.

SYSTEMS PERIPHERALS CD-ROMs NOTEBOOKS SOFTWARE

★★★★★ INCREDIBLE ★★★★ GREAT ★★★ GOOD ★★ RELIABLE ★ SATISFACTORY

How We Chose the Direct 60

To develop *PC Computing*'s Direct 60, we commissioned Russ Lockwood and Peter Ruber, two outside experts who have studied the direct market as journalists and researchers. They chose companies with exceptional price, selection, and/or service.

We also asked a panel of six experts within Ziff-Davis—analysts, editors, and researchers who know the market well—to nominate other notable direct companies.

We then faxed questionnaires to the companies, asking about their service policies—specifically, what they offer in the way of guarantees, warranties, technical support, and sales support. The final list included companies recommended by Lockwood or Ruber (and in many cases both) or at least two Ziff-Davis experts.

Our zero to five ratings are based on the company's responses to our 6-page questionnaire. The highest sales and service ratings go to companies with, among other things, 24-hour sales and 24-hour, toll-free technical support; online, fax-back, or BBS tech support in addition to phone support; at least a month of training for salespeople; and a guarantee that they'll pay postage on overnight replacements.

To arrive at the guarantee and warranty rating we assessed policies—does the company offer a full year of onsite repair? Three years? Lifetime tech support, 30-day money-back guarantees, overnight replacement, and all postage paid on returns and exchanges also won points.

Finally, our overall rating is based on both the sales and service, and guarantee and warranty ratings. When averaging scores for overall ratings, we rounded up, so companies with 4 stars for sales and service and 4.5 for guarantees and warranties won a 4.5-star rating for overall excellence.

We didn't rate the direct companies on how well they *deliver* on their promises. That's subjective, and testing for it still may not have fairly measured a company's service and product. Our list will get you started. Good luck.

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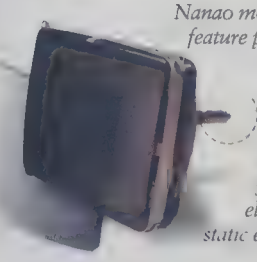

Nanao monitors feature protective coatings and panels that reduce glare and eliminate static electricity.

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Model	Size	Dot Pitch	Scan Frequency	Recommended Resolution
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

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Circle 212 on reader service card.

[illegible]

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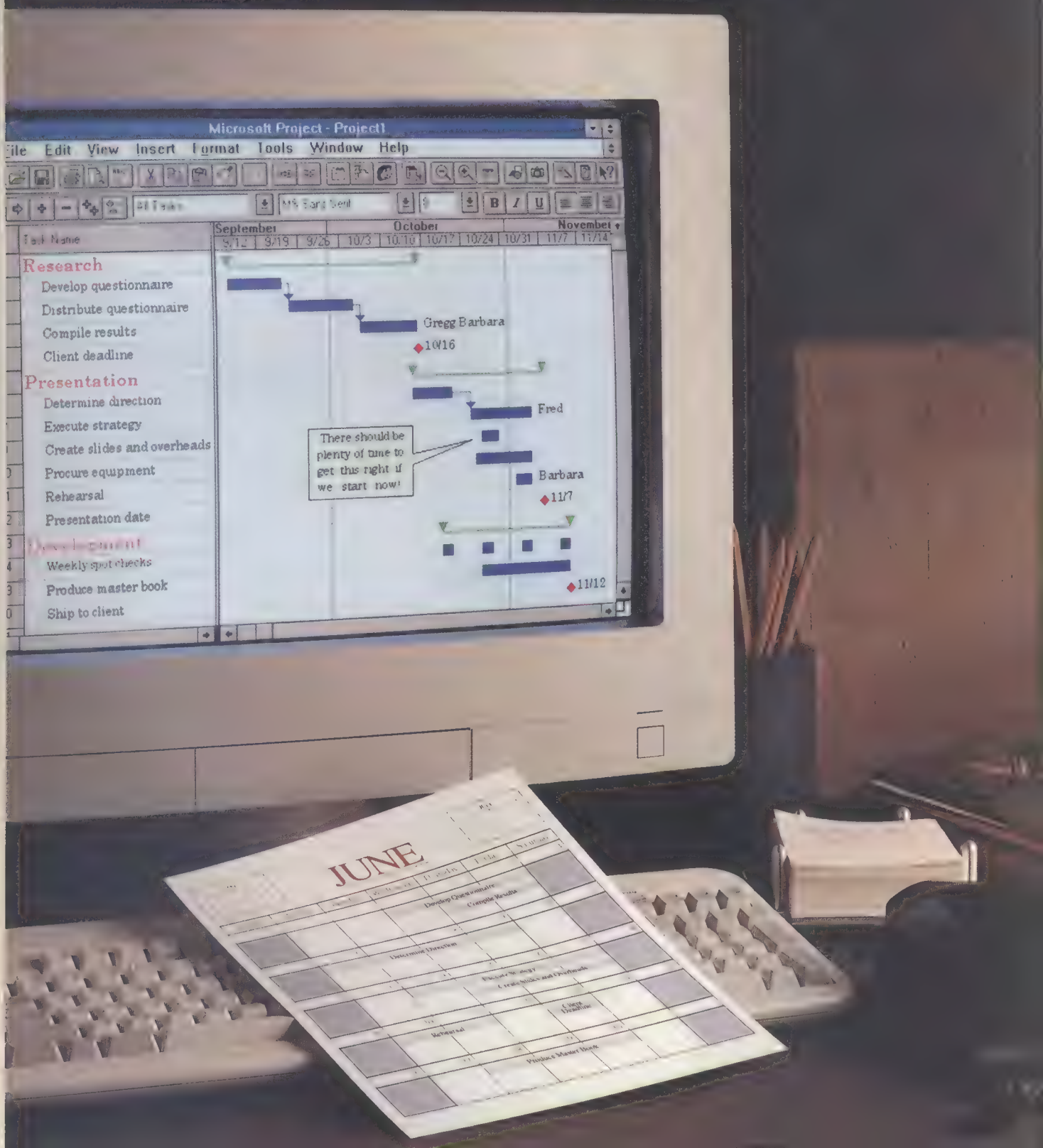

Introducing new Microsoft® Project version 4.0.

As long as people have had things to plan, they've always looked for better ways to organize and manage the process.

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It helps you plan, manage and communicate with ease.

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Your plan is automatically converted to easy-to-read reports. Calendars. And charts. (Like the examples you can see at the left.)

It watches how you work and guides you step by step.

Like other programs in the Microsoft Office family, Microsoft Project features IntelliSense™ technology. Simply stated, your software now senses what you want to do and helps you do it.

For example, PlanningWizards offer suggestions as you go, to help you avoid problems down the line.

Cue Cards help you set up your plan with step-by-step instructions that stay on the screen as you work.

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What's this all mean? Simply that you can get started right away. And learn as you go along.

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Chances are you're not the only one working on the project. Microsoft Project was developed with this in mind.

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Microsoft

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Help

BRIAN LIVINGSTON SHOWS HOW TO USE SCANDISK

Of Dentists and Disk Drives

Brushing and flossing prevent tooth decay. Regular eye examinations will keep your prescription up-to-date. A routine physical can detect heart disease. And running ScanDisk on your hard disk can nip data loss in the bud. The leap from medicine to disk drives might seem far-fetched, but your disk needs proper preventive care, too. Bad sectors and poorly maintained hard disks account for most data loss, but you can avoid these problems easily with an ounce of preventive medicine.

In MS-DOS 6.2, Microsoft has finally come around and quietly introduced ScanDisk, a crucial diagnostic, maintenance, and repair utility users have long been asking for. ScanDisk is poorly documented and most DOS users know little or nothing about how much it can help guard their programs and data against potential disaster.

ScanDisk tests hard disks and floppy disks for directory damage that can trap files and crash applications. Even better, it can detect and correct weak spots on your hard disk and move your data to safety, before the flaw gets bad enough to actually corrupt data.

There are, of course, other disk surface-scan utilities, including time-tested veterans such as Norton Disk Doctor, which is part of Symantec's Norton Utilities, and DiskFix, included in Central Point Software's PC Tools for DOS. ScanDisk's advantage over these third-party utilities is clear: It's free with MS-DOS 6.2.

No Perfect Disks Before I reveal ScanDisk's features, it's important to know why such a utility is necessary.

No disk is ever created perfect at the factory. Every hard disk bears a layer of magnetic coating that contains microscopic imperfections. Because some of these flaws are large enough to interfere with a magnetic 1 or 0 being written to the disk, whole clusters (usually less than 1 percent of a new disk) may be marked "bad" by the manufacturer so nothing will be written there. But over time, tiny flakes of the coating may fly off as the disk rotates, which causes a gradual increase in the number of sectors that should be considered "bad."

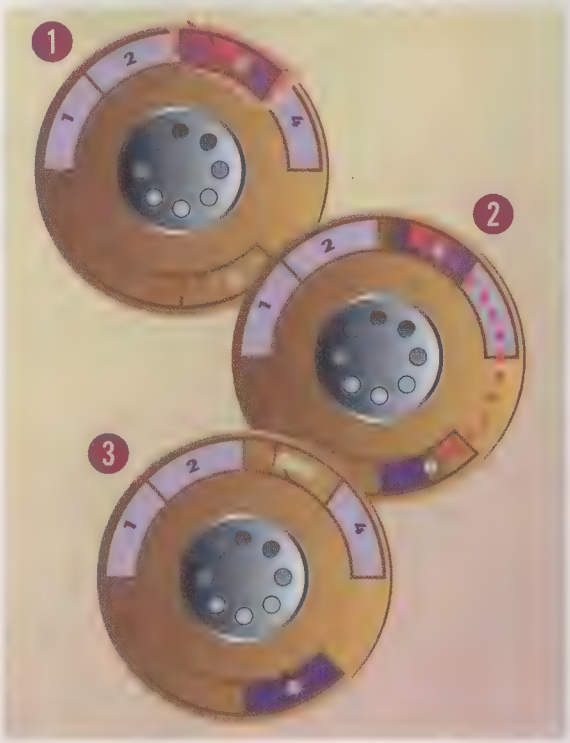
DOS never had a provision for noticing and marking these bad sectors as they deteriorated. In fact, until MS-DOS 6.2, using the FORMAT command on a disk essentially cleared the sectors that had been marked "bad," and marked them "good" again. FORMAT then performed its own integrity test, which was not nearly as thorough as a real surface-scan utility.

Rules of the Road Because MS-DOS 6.2 was just a bug-fix upgrade, Microsoft didn't even bother to print a new manual for it. Buyers of version 6.2 received the same old MS-DOS 6 manual, which contained no information about ScanDisk. If you knew enough to type HELP WHATSNEW, you could see a whole paragraph on ScanDisk, along with a few of the other features added to MS-DOS 6.2. Or you could type HELP SCANDISK, and see a few screens of computerese.

Because there is so little in print on ScanDisk, I'll summarize the utility's command-line format for you. In general, ScanDisk's syntax looks like this:

SCANDISK *{drivespec} {mode} {options}*

HOW IT WORKS FIX DISKS & FILES WITH SCANDISK



MS-DOS 6.2's replacement for CHKDSK is SCANDISK. In addition to being able to fix lost clusters, SCANDISK can perform a low-level surface analysis on a disk drive.

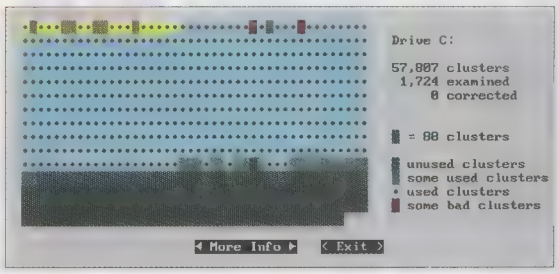
1. SURFACE SCAN Scanning the disk's surface cluster by cluster, ScanDisk finds a file occupying clusters 1, 2, 3, and 4. However, some of cluster 3 is unreadable or becoming unreliable.

2. MOVE DATA ScanDisk moves as much of the data as possible to a vacant cluster, for example, cluster 6. If some data is unreadable, ScanDisk fills the bad spots with zeros.

3. MARK CLUSTER ScanDisk marks cluster 3 "bad" and updates its reference, as well as the file's location, in the File Allocation Table.

SNAPSHOT A GLIMPSE OF SCANDISK

Surface Scan: The factory marked your disk drive's faulty clusters. But clusters go bad after you buy the disk, too. ScanDisk identifies them and moves the files to safety.



If you want to scan the current disk only, type the command without parameters:

```
SCANDISK
```

In this mode, ScanDisk immediately starts its analysis, which shows its progress in a character-mode display. (You should not run ScanDisk under Windows or any task-switcher, because ScanDisk can be confused by open files.) After checking your directory structures, ScanDisk asks if you would like it to perform a surface scan. If you say yes, it looks for bad sectors and displays a report with its findings and recommendations, if any.

For ScanDisk's disk drive spec, you can type any number of hard-drive or floppy-drive letters, or use the switch /ALL to make ScanDisk examine all hard disks. (ScanDisk does not analyze network drives.) For example, all of the following are valid ScanDisk commands:

```
SCANDISK C:
SCANDISK A: C: D:
SCANDISK /ALL
```

You can also specify a variety of modes on the command line:

- /CHECKONLY tells ScanDisk to analyze your drives, but not to change anything.
- /AUTOFIX cleans up corrupt file fragments without prompting you first. In this mode, ScanDisk converts lost clusters into files with names like FILE0001.CHK, and places these files in the root directory of the drive being examined. These files, which were already in a DOS netherworld, could possibly be reassembled by a disk guru but are probably useless—just bits of loose data.
- /AUTOFIX /NOSAVE deletes any lost clusters instead of saving them into files. This is a quick way to make sure these clusters don't affect any other files you write later.
- /CUSTOM tells ScanDisk to use settings you put into a SCANDISK.INI file in the directory where you installed DOS.

In addition to these modes, ScanDisk also supports several optional switches:

- /SURFACE makes ScanDisk proceed from its directory checkup to its surface scan without waiting for you to press a key at a prompt. This is the best option when you plan to run a ScanDisk routine regularly in your AUTOEXEC.BAT (see "A ScanDisk a Day Keeps the Doctor Away," page 184).
- /MONO tells ScanDisk not to use colors—a must for black-and-white displays.
- /NOSUMMARY suppresses the full-screen reports ScanDisk displays after checking each disk. If there are errors, this also prevents ScanDisk from halting and asking you to insert an Undo floppy disk into a floppy drive before proceeding. Unless you are a disk drive expert, you probably would never need anything ScanDisk would write on such an Undo floppy disk.

ScanDisk is very flexible—you may use any combination of parameters:

```
SCANDISK /ALL /AUTOFIX
SCANDISK /AUTOFIX /NOSAVE
SCANDISK C: D: /CUSTOM
SCANDISK /ALL /SURFACE
/NOSUMMARY
SCANDISK C: D: /CHECKONLY /MONO
```

The Best Medicine Now we come to ScanDisk's most useful and least documented feature: the ability to detect spots on your disk that are beginning to weaken, and move data to a stronger cluster before any files are actually lost.

/TIME is the oddly named switch that enables this important capability. This switch makes ScanDisk monitor the average read, write, and seek times of your disk while carrying out a surface analysis. This allows ScanDisk to determine which sectors require a lot of extra work to read. At some point, those sectors will fade enough to threaten your data. ScanDisk can move your files to safety and mark those faded sectors "bad" so that new files won't be written there.

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It's so easy to avoid strange crashes with this utility that everyone running MS-DOS 6.2 should take advantage of it on a regular basis. ScanDisk requires only about a minute to check most smaller disks (say under 200MB), so if your system is more than a few months old, you might find it worthwhile to run ScanDisk every day. If you have a large new hard disk, on the other hand, you might want to put up with a 10-minute ScanDisk routine only once a month.

ScanDisk creates a file called SCANDISK.LOG in the root directory of your C: drive where it reports the results of its efforts. This is a plain text file that you should print each time you run ScanDisk. If the report shows any lost clusters or other problems, you can check your data's integrity immediately.

Unfortunately, just like every other new program I've seen from Microsoft, ScanDisk can interfere with some other DOS utilities, and may even be incompatible with major computer products.

The worst problem crops up if you run ScanDisk after you've installed MS-DOS 6.2 on top of IBM's PC DOS 6.1 and used IBM's disk compression. This could occur if you have a PS/2 with PC DOS 6.1 and have compressed your hard disk with SuperStor. Apparently, Microsoft didn't bother to test ScanDisk on its former business partner's version of DOS, because ScanDisk can totally scramble the contents of the compressed disk.

According to Microsoft, the MS-DOS 6.2 upgrade process also leaves the two hidden system files (IBMBIO.COM and IBMSYS.COM) in the root directory of C: when version 6.2 is installed over any version of PC DOS. These old 6.1 files can cause your keyboard to freeze and the Windows File Manager to behave erratically. You can delete these files with a new command in MS-DOS 6.*x* called DELTREE. Running the following command in the root directory of C: will delete the two hidden files, IBMBIO.COM and IBMSYS.COM:

```
DELTREE /Y C:\IBM*.COM
```

Data loss may result if you use ScanDisk with an Acculogic sIDE-3/Plus IDE disk controller in one specific instance. If the IDE drive type is not supported by a PC's ROM BIOS, and the BIOS chip on the Acculogic disk controller is therefore enabled, there is a conflict when ScanDisk (or any surface-scan utility) makes Interrupt 25h and 26h calls to read and write sectors. For more information, call Acculogic's technical support department at (714) 454-2441.

Also, you're not supposed to run ScanDisk in a DOS session under Windows—ScanDisk might "fix" a valid file that simply happened to be open in a Windows application. Windows for Workgroups 3.11 has a more common, but less potentially disastrous hazard. If you turn on the so-called 32-Bit File Access in Windows for Workgroups' Control Panel, the 32-bit driver sometimes writes an extra file entry into the DoubleSpace File Allocation Table, MDFAT, on a compressed disk. These entries are relatively harmless, but they take up disk space. When you run ScanDisk, it may report "nnnn bytes of data on drive x: that might be one or more lost files or directories, but which is probably just taking up space." ScanDisk will proceed to rename these lost files with names like FILE0001.CHK. You can delete these files to reclaim the disk space, and no valid files will be affected.

A Rough Jewel Despite the relatively rare conflicts mentioned above, ScanDisk is truly a bargain that all users of MS-DOS 6.2 should take advantage of. With the investment of a very small amount of time, ScanDisk can pay big dividends in reliability and peace of mind.

BRIAN LIVINGSTON is the author of *Windows 3.1 Secrets* (1992) and *More Windows Secrets* (1993), and is the co-author of *Windows Gizmos* (1994). All three are published by IDG Books.

EXPERT TIP A SCANDISK A DAY KEEPS THE DOCTOR AWAY

Here's an easy way to run ScanDisk at regular intervals. Say you want to correct disk errors every Monday when you first start your computer and are getting your morning coffee. Add the following lines to your AUTOEXEC.BAT:

```
REM Run Scandisk every Monday, if not already run.
ECHO. | DATE | FIND /I "Mon" > C:\DOS\TESTDAY1.TXT
COPY C:\DOS\TESTDAY1.TXT C:\DOS\TESTDAY2.TXT
IF EXIST C:\DOS\TESTDAY2.TXT GOTO DOSCAN
IF EXIST C:\DOS\SCANDONE.TXT DEL C:\DOS\SCANDONE.TXT
GOTO CLEANUP
:DOSCAN
IF EXIST C:\DOS\SCANDONE.TXT GOTO CLEANUP
SCANDISK /ALL /CUSTOM
ECHO Scandisk was run today. > C:\DOS\SCANDONE.TXT
IF NOT ERRORLEVEL 1 GOTO CLEANUP
TYPE C:\SCANDISK.LOG | MORE
PAUSE
:CLEANUP
DEL C:\DOS\TESTDAY*.TXT
:CONTINUE
```

The /CUSTOM switch after the SCANDISK command above makes the utility look for settings in the SCANDISK.INI file found in your MS-DOS 6.2*x* directory. I recommend that you use the settings below.

```
[ENVIRONMENT]
ScanTimeOut = On
[CUSTOM]
DriveSummary = Off
AllSummary = Off
Surface = Always
CheckHost = Always
SaveLog = Overwrite
Undo = Never
```

Use EDIT or another text editor to make the changes. For complete documentation, read the comments in the INI file. (Note: The lines in the INI file that begin with semicolons are comments.)

SO WHAT DO YOU WANT FOR $2,999?

THE PRICEPOINT WEEKLY

Dell's Pentium entry leads pack in price, value

By Randy Wussler

Dell Computer Corp. instantly leapt into the price leadership position of the Pentium market with the release of the 90MHz Dimension XPS P90.

With an initial $2,999 street price and a configuration featuring a CD ROM and 1M byte of video RAM, the model looks to be an even better value than 60MHz entries from Gateway 2000 and Packard Bell. Dell told us that we could expect delivery of the new system within eight days of our order.

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PC Week, April 25, 1994

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Unbelievably, the new Dell Dimension 90 MHz Pentium XPS P90 is only $2,999.

At this price, and with this special high-performance configuration, *PC Week* says it is an "... even better value than the 60MHz entries from Gateway 2000 and Packard Bell." Better yet, it's available; this configuration can usually be delivered within 8 days.

And with it comes all of the support and service that helped Dell rank highest in J.D. Powers & Associates' 1993 Desktop PC Customer Satisfaction Study.†

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*Promotional pricing expires 7/31/94. †1993 J.D. Power and Associates Desktop Personal Computer Satisfaction Study conducted among 1,956 business user respondents. *Prices valid in the U.S. only. Some products and promotions not available in Canada. ◊Business leasing arranged by Leasing Group, Inc. MS-DOS and Microsoft are registered trademarks and Windows is a trademark of Microsoft Corporation. The Intel and Pentium logos and Pentium are trademarks of Intel Corporation. Dell disclaims proprietary interest in the marks and names of others. ©1994 Dell Computer Corporation. All rights reserved.

THERE'S MORE TO IT THAN PRESSING F1

Need Color? A Quick History? Help Is on the Way

A well-designed application packs more information into its online Windows Help files than it puts into the printed manuals. Once you've mastered the basics, spending just a few minutes wandering through an application's online Help files can turn up shortcuts and suggestions that will save you hours of trouble later. Virtually all Windows applications use compiled Help files designed to be read by WINHELP.EXE, the Windows Help Engine. Whenever you press F1 or click the Help menu from within an application, your action launches WINHELP and loads the appropriate file.

By default, Windows 3.1 Help includes a powerful search engine that lets you browse through keywords and topics. If you're clever, you can create some speedy shortcuts for getting the most from Help.

Color Therapy For starters, let's fix one of Windows' most painful aesthetic lapses. By default, WINHELP uses only one color to highlight special text—a hideous lime-green that virtually disappears into the bright white background.

Here's how to change colors: Use Notepad or another plain text editor to open WIN.INI. Search for the section heading [Windows Help]. The code for each color is stored as a series of three numbers, each between 0 and 255; they determine the amount of red, green, and blue, respectively. If the necessary entries aren't there, you'll have to add them yourself. Here's an example:

```
[Windows Help]
JumpColor=255 0 0
IFJumpColor=255 0 0
PopUpColor=0 0 128
IFPopupColor= 0 0 128
MacroColor=128 0 128
```

JumpColor (in this example, red) indicates hypertext links between topics in the active help file, while IFJumpColor (which is also red) tags pointers to topics in another file. Likewise, PopUpColor and IFPopupColor (both blue) add a dashed underline in the current file and mark pop-up explanations in external files. (The IF stands for interfile jumps and pop-ups, by the way.) MacroColor (purple) calls out embedded macros that execute when you click on the highlighted text. To find out more about color codes, go to Main, select Control Panel, Colors, Color Palette, Define Custom Colors. In the Red, Green, and Blue boxes, type 0, 128, or 255 (or any combination thereof), and note the solid box for results.

Beware of one gotcha that lies waiting if you alter the colors in WINHELP: Some Help-file creators use rich text format (RTF) to add color (see "Create Your Own Help Files," below). If they choose the same colors you use, you'll discover decorative headings that don't jump or pop up when you click them—all they do is play dead.

Study History The History button on the Help toolbar activates the pop-up Help list that keeps track of your footsteps as you wander through a help file. After consulting Help, don't close the file—instead, minimize the WINHELP application. This keeps the History active and lets you easily retrace your steps. If you close and then restart Help, not only do you waste time waiting for it to reload, you also clear the History list.

If you understand how History works, you can take advantage of an undocumented WINHELP feature to switch rapidly between help files. Let's say you're trying

BEST BUYS CREATE YOUR OWN HELP FILES

You can now create or modify Windows Help files. Tools such as Blue Sky Software's RoboHelp or WexTech's Doc-To-Help take Microsoft Word documents in Rich Text Format (RTF) and compile them into Help files.

Since you can access Help files as standalone programs, you can even create all-purpose tutorials that users can get to from Program Manager. A good use might be to detail a work procedure such as instructions on filling out forms or filing reports. Both products create hypertext links, buttons, pop-ups, embedded graphics, tables of contents, indexes, and everything you need for developing good Help screens or tutorials.

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Reader Service No. 765

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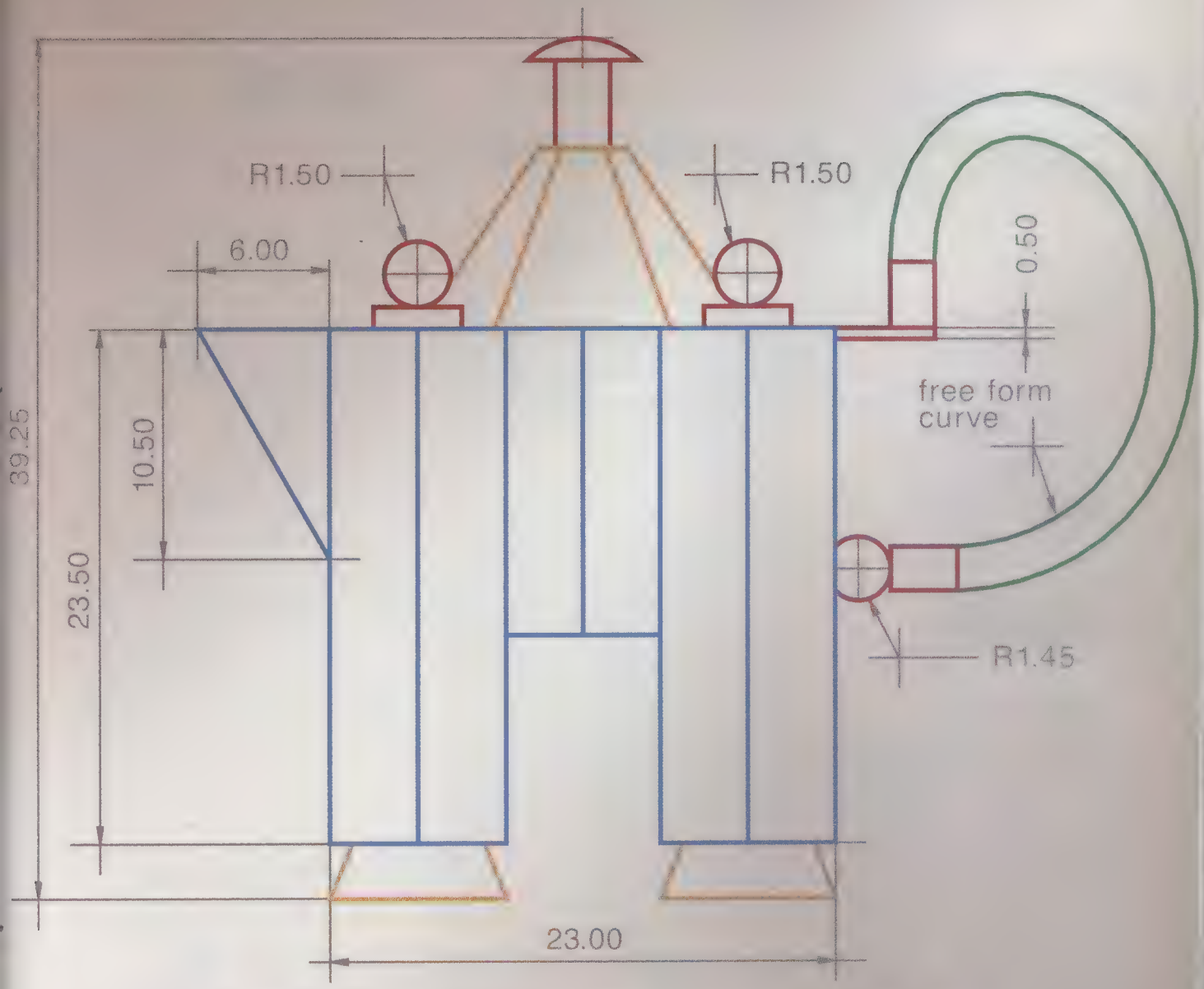
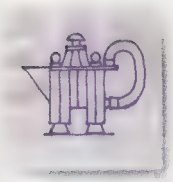
1. RoboHelp The latest release of Blue Sky's RoboHelp (Version 2.6) creates Help files for Windows NT as well as Windows 3.1, and you can create documents in Microsoft Word 2.0 or 6.0.

2. Doc-To-Help This product is available in two versions: 1.5 is for Microsoft Word 2.0 users and 1.6 is for Word 6.0 users. The latter creates Windows 3.1 and NT Help files. WexTech provides Version 1.6 free of charge to all registered 1.5 users.

—YAEL LI-RON



Twenty minutes ago this was a cocktail napkin.



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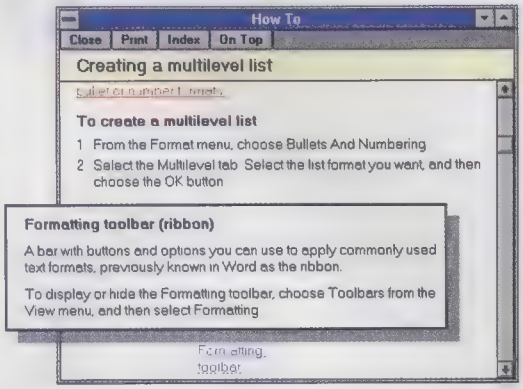
EXPERT TIP HELP COLOR CUSTOMIZATION

Use Different Colors: By making a simple change to your WIN.INI file, you can get Windows Help to use different colors. Here we set PopUpColor = 0 0 128 so our hypertext links at the bottom of the screen come up blue instead of lime-green. Most of the the screen is still black and white.



to figure out how to embed a Microsoft Word table into a Freelance Graphics presentation. The Word Help file includes some of the steps, but it doesn't have all the answers you need. So you minimize the Word Help file, switch to Freelance, and press F1. Click on the History button or press Alt-T and you'll find steps from both Help files in your History list, although only one instance of WINHELP is open. Click on any entry in the list and you'll jump right to it, even if it's located in another Help file.

Hold That Thought WINHELP also includes a useful feature that lets you add a virtual bookmark in any Help file. If you constantly use the same information—say, from a macro programming reference in Help format—mark the pages you use most often. Choose Bookmark Define from the WINHELP menu, give the listing a title, and click OK. The pointers for all Help files are stored in a file named WINHELP.BMK, found in the Windows directory. If you use this feature regularly, be sure to back up this file!

To use bookmarks that you defined previously, just pull down the Bookmark menu. The first nine entries appear on the menu; to get to the rest of them, click on More. Because WINHELP lists Bookmarks in alphabetical order, you'll probably want to use the numbers 1 through 9 to lead off the entries for the pages you go to most frequently.

You can't edit a Windows Help file directly, but you can add notes, just as you might scribble in the margin of a printed manual. These notes can be especially handy when you uncover a useful factoid that corrects a misleading Help file entry or adds crucial information. To add an annotation, click on Edit Annotate. WINHELP adds a paper-clip icon in the upper left corner of a Help topic that has been annotated. (The color of the paper-clip graphic is the same as the JumpColor entry.) To view annotations, click on the paper clip icon.

Annotations are saved in the Windows directory in separate files, each using the same filename as the accompanying Help file but with the extension ANN. So, for example, notes you keep for MAINXL.HLP are kept in a file called MAINXL.ANN. Again, if you use this feature regularly, be sure to back up your annotation files. ED BOTT

PC Contact HELP TO TEXT

SmartDoc
Frustrated that you can't convert help topics to text files? You can copy small portions to the Clipboard, but there's a better way. SmartDoc is a shareware utility that generates text files from any Help file. Download SMTDOC.ZIP from data library 3 (Utilities/Misc.) of PC Contact, or send £14.50 (that's about $21) to Oakley Data Services at 3, Oakley Close, Sandbach, Cheshire CW11, 9RQ, England. See page 228 for information on downloading from PC Contact or ordering the disk from Public Brand Software.

WIN TIPS

SIGN YOUR FAXES

Problem: *You're using a fax modem and need to add your signature to faxed letters.*

Solution: If you have access to a scanner, it's easy to capture a signature as a PCX file. No scanner? No problem. Use your fax modem to capture your John Hancock. Here's how: Sign your name on a sheet of paper, go to a friend's fax machine and send it to your fax modem. When you receive the fax, save it as a PCX file and use Windows Paintbrush or another paint program to cut the signature and paste it into its own PCX file. When you've finished a piece of correspondence and want to sign it, use your word processor to place the signature where you want it (you can even save it as a Glossary entry in Word for Windows). Send the file to your fax modem and your letter is signed, sealed, and ready to be digitally delivered.

ED BOTT
SENIOR CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

KEEP SECRETS SECRET

Problem: *You want to protect your screen from prying (novice) eyes when you load Windows.*

Solution: Load a screen saver automatically when you load Windows. Better yet, load a screen saver that you can password-protect. The screen savers that come with Windows 3.1 (except Blank Screen) include a password option, and with a little work, it's easy to load them when you start Windows. First, in a text editor such as Notepad or Sysedit, open WIN.INI and find the Programs=com exe bat pif line. Add a space and scr to the end of the line, then save the file and exit the editor. Next, open the Startup group, select File, New, Program Item, OK. At the Description line type Screen Saver and at the Command Line type C:\WINDOWS\SSSTARS.SCR /S (or

"They Can Network Me.

Make Me Interactive.

Even put Me

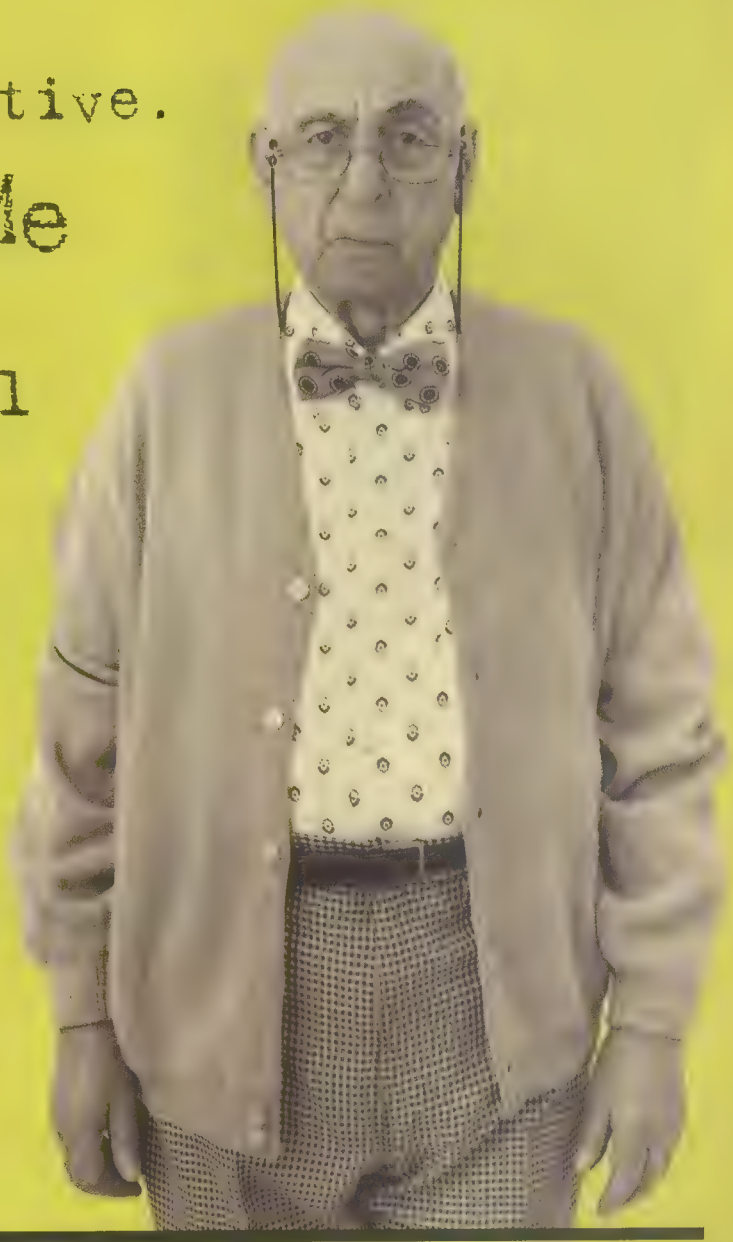
On Some Digital

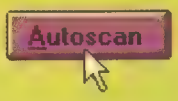
Expressway. Can't

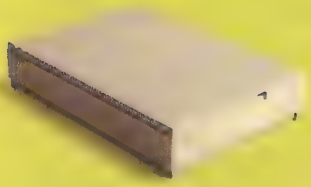
Someone just

Cure My

Scanaphobia?"







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use the filename of any other screen saver with the SCR extension except SCRNSAVE.SCR). To enable the screen saver's password protection, open the Main group, select Control Panel and then Desktop. Click on the Screen Saver button and select Starfield Simulation (or whatever screen saver you're loading in WIN.INI). Press the Setup button, check the "Password Protected" option, and select Set Password. Type a password and exit. Next time you load Windows, a dialog box prompting you for a password will be displayed.

MATTHEW LAKE
SENIOR EDITOR

NO MORE SECRETS

Problem: *Somebody configured your system with a password-protected screen saver in your absence, and you want to disable it.*

Solution: In a text editor such as EDIT in DOS 6.*x*, edit the file CONTROL.INI located in the Windows directory. Search for PWProtected=1, and change every occurrence of this line to read PWProtected=0. Next, search for [ScreenSaver] and remove that line and the one immediately below it—the one that reads Password= followed by something cryptic. Now edit WIN.INI, search for ScreenSaveActive=1 and type 0 instead of 1. The next time you load Windows, the password will be gone, and you can reconfigure the screen saver with one of your own.

YAEL LI-RON
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

DON'T TELL ME

Problem: *You're tired of reading the session instructions that Windows 3.1 provides every time you shell out to DOS.*

Solution: It's easy to remove that screen so your DOS sessions begin with a pristine C:\ prompt. Using a text editor such as Notepad, open SYSTEM.INI. In the section labeled [386Enh], add the line DOSPromptExitInstruc=no. Save your changes, then exit and restart Windows. When you shell out to DOS, the instructions will no longer clutter your screen: You'll see only Microsoft's copyright message and then the prompt.

ALISON PERRY
MADISON, WISCONSIN

SLOW DOS REMEDY

Problem: *DOS applications run slowly.*

Solution: Using a text editor such as Notepad or Sysedit, open SYSTEM.INI and go to the [386Enh] section and add the line FileSysChange=Off. In a nutshell, DOS boxes will no longer waste time keeping File Manager posted when they create, rename, or delete files. If you're running Windows in standard mode, this setting should already be turned off.

ALISON PERRY
MADISON, WISCONSIN

HOT TIP — TERMINAL

Problem: Terminal doesn't provide a phone book for numbers you call frequently.

Solution: In Terminal, select Settings and set up the parameters for the service you want to call, such as the phone number and the kind of terminal emulation, transfer protocol, and function key macros needed for logging on and navigating around. Once you've set it up, select File, Save As to save the settings in a TRM file. Give it a descriptive name so that you'll know what service is associated with the settings. Repeat this process for any other services you regularly call. From now on, you can use File, Open to call up a list of all your settings files. Load the one you want and then dial the service with your preferred settings.

—JOE SALEMI
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NIFTY SCRIPTS THAT REVEAL HIDDEN POWERS

Get Inside the Really Undocumented DOS

If you love a secret, you probably love undocumented DOS commands and command switches. But some of them are now so popular that they've become a well-established part of DOS lore and hardly qualify for secret status anymore. A classic example is TRUENAME, which debuted in DOS 4. TRUENAME accepts a filename and displays its drive and path as well as its name, and even "sees through" aliases created by commands such as SUBST. Whether the command is useful is beside the point. The fact that it's there, and that it's undocumented, is reason enough for some users to want to know everything there is to know about it.

There is but a handful of undocumented DOS commands, and the majority of them, as it turns out, are like TRUENAME: not very useful. But there are dozens of undocumented DOS programming functions, many of which *are* useful. Programming functions are routines in the DOS kernel that programs can call upon to perform common tasks such as opening and closing files. You can't access a programming function from the command line as you can a conventional DOS command. Fortunately, you can use DEBUG to write a short intermediary program that invokes a programming function to perform an action.

The DEBUG scripts described below use undocumented DOS functions as the basis for some interesting, although slightly unusual, DOS utilities.

Disabled Drives It is occasionally desirable to "hide" certain drives from an application—such as a virus scanning program that scans every drive in your system. Or a program that attempts to read the disk in every drive named with a letter C or higher, and crashes when it comes across an empty CD-ROM drive.

It has always been possible to disable a drive by flipping bits in an undocumented DOS data structure called the Current Directory Structure (CDS). Each CDS stores information unique to the drive, such as the name of the current directory and a flag indicating whether the drive is active. DOS 5 and 6 support a pair of new, undocumented calls that permit you to disable and enable a drive with a simple function call. See "Hide Your Information," below, for how to use this pair of functions.

Print Logging Most DOS users know that pressing Ctrl-P at the DOS prompt toggles print logging on and off. With print logging on, everything that DOS normally writes to the screen—such as the output from a DIR or CHKDSK command—goes to the screen and printer. There is no documented means for a program to toggle print logging on or off, but—you guessed it—there is a way to do it. The next DEBUG script creates LOGGING.COM, which turns print logging on and off in response to a command instead of a key combination. Because it accesses an internal flag whose location in the DOS data segment varies with DOS versions, LOGGING.COM requires DOS 5 or later.

```
N LOGGING.COM
E 0100 EB 2F 53 79 6E 74 61 78
E 0108 3A 20 4C 4F 47 47 49 4E
E 0110 47 20 4F 4E 7C 4F 46 46
E 0118 0D 0A 24 52 65 71 75 69
E 0120 72 65 73 20 44 4F 53 20
E 0128 35 20 6F 72 20 36 0D 0A
E 0130 24 B4 30 CD 21 BA 1B 01
E 0138 3C 05 72 3E 3C 06 77 3A
E 0140 FC BE 81 00 AC 3C 20 74
E 0148 FB 3C 09 74 F7 BA 02 01
E 0150 3C 0D 74 26 4E AD 25 DF
E 0158 DF 3C 4F 75 1D B0 FF 80
E 0160 FC 4E 74 07 32 C0 80 FC
```

HOW TO DO IT — HIDE YOUR INFORMATION

The following DEBUG scripts are for DOS 5 or later. They create programs that use the DISABLE and ENABLE functions to temporarily disable then re-enable an active drive:

```
N DISABLE.COM
E 0100 EB 35 53 79 6E 74 61 78
E 0108 3A 20 44 49 53 41 42 4C
E 0110 45 20 64 5B 3A 5D 0D 0A
E 0118 24 49 6E 76 61 6C 69 64
E 0120 20 64 72 69 76 65 20 73
E 0128 70 65 63 69 66 69 63 61
E 0130 74 69 6F 6E 0D 0A 24 FC
E 0138 BE 81 00 AC 3C 20 74 FB
E 0140 3C 09 74 F7 BA 02 01 3C
E 0148 0D 75 09 B4 09 CD 21 B8
E 0150 01 4C CD 21 BA 19 01 24
E 0158 DF 3C 41 72 EE 3C 5A 77
E 0160 EA 8A D0 80 EA 41 B8 08
E 0168 5F CD 21 73 05 BA 19 01
E 0170 EB D9 B8 00 4C CD 21
RCX
77
W
Q
```

```
N ENABLE.COM
E 0100 EB 34 53 79 6E 74 61 78
E 0108 3A 20 45 4E 41 42 4C 45
E 0110 20 64 5B 3A 5D 0D 0A 24
E 0118 49 6E 76 61 6C 69 64 20
E 0120 64 72 69 76 65 20 73 70
E 0128 65 63 69 66 69 63 61 74
E 0130 69 6F 6E 0D 0A 24 FC BE
E 0138 81 00 AC 3C 20 74 FB 3C
E 0140 09 74 F7 BA 02 01 3C 0D
E 0148 75 09 B4 09 CD 21 B8 01
E 0150 4C CD 21 BA 18 01 24 DF
E 0158 3C 41 72 EE 3C 5A 77 EA
E 0160 8A D0 80 EA 41 B8 07 5F
E 0168 CD 21 73 05 BA 18 01 EB
E 0170 D9 B8 00 4C CD 21
RCX
76
W
Q
```

Enter these scripts into a text editor and save them as DISABLE.SCR and ENABLE.SCR, respectively. Exit and type DEBUG < DISABLE.SCR (or ENABLE.SCR) to compile the scripts. Disable and enable the H: drive by typing DISABLE H: or ENABLE H:, respectively.

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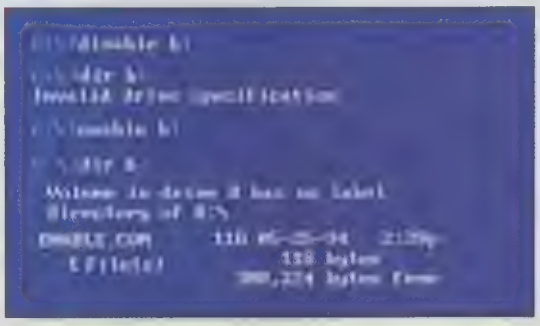
WORKAROUNDS DRIVE PROTECTION

Vanished: If your drive is invisible, it can't be accessed. Use DISABLE and ENABLE to hide drives from prying eyes or even viruses. These utilities work on floppy drives and hard disks, but not on network drives.



```
E 0168 46 75 0F 50 B4 34 CD 21
E 0170 58 26 A2 FE 02 B8 00 4C
E 0178 CD 21 B4 09 CD 21 B8 01
E 0180 4C CD 21
RCX
83
W
Q
```

Create the script as you did DISABLE.SCR (in "Hide Your Information"), but call the file LOGGING.SCR. To start or stop print logging, use LOGGING ON or LOGGING OFF, respectively, from your batch file.

Full Screen Enhanced-mode Windows does a fair job of running character-mode DOS applications in a window, but graphics-mode DOS applications sometimes present problems. FULLSCR.COM, which you can create with the following DEBUG script, is one such command. When executed in a windowed DOS session in Windows 3.0 or 3.1, FULLSCR switches the session to full screen:

```
N FULLSCR.COM
E 0100 EB 04 00 00 00 00 B8 84
E 0108 16 BB 15 00 CD 2F 0B FF
E 0110 75 06 8C C0 0B C0 74 0F
E 0118 89 3E 02 01 8C 06 04 01
E 0120 B8 01 00 FF 1E 02 01 B8
E 0128 00 4C CD 21
RCX
2C
W
Q
```

Why do you need FULLSCR when Alt-Enter achieves the same thing? If you run windowed DOS sessions and launch DOS applications from that prompt (particularly programs such as Lotus 1-2-3's Wysiwyg mode and Microsoft Flight Simulator), you're asking for trouble. Call FULLSCR from a batch file that calls those applications in turn and the problems go away.

How does it work? Much of the work that's involved in managing DOS sessions in the Windows environment falls to a virtual device driver (VxD) named DOSMGR, which supports an undocumented function call that switches the current DOS session to full screen. It is this function call that allows DOS to switch to full screen when a critical error occurs. All FULLSCR does is obtain the entry-point address for DOSMGR function calls and call the entry point with the appropriate register values. Unfortunately, there does not appear to be a function—documented or undocumented—for switching back to a windowed state. JEFF PROSISE

JEFF PROSISE is not only your DOS guru, he's the author of *Windows Desktop Utilities* (ZD Press, 1994).

PC Contact REGULAR RUNS

Torok Scheduler
Wouldn't you like your computer to automatically run a backup on Fridays? Torok Scheduler lets you do just that: Add it to your AUTOEXEC.BAT file, and it will run the programs you select when you start your computer. You can also customize the program to run regularly after a specified number of days. Download TOROK.ZIP from PC Contact's data library 3 (Utilities/Misc.), or contact Michael Torok directly at (408) 336-8625. See page 228 for information on ordering the disk from Public Brand Software.

DOS TIPS

COMMAND EXCEPTIONS

Problem: *There is no "except for" parameter for DOS commands.*

Solution: Meet NOT.BAT, a batch file that feeds exceptions to commands in DOS. To create it, go to your DOS directory, type EDIT NOT.BAT, and type the following lines:

```
@ECHO OFF
IF %1!==! GOTO SYNTAX
SET SWITCH=
IF NOT %1!==/S! IF NOT
%1!==/s! GOTO SKIP
SET SWITCH=/S
SHIFT
:SKIP
ECHO @ECHO
OFF>C:\DOS\NRESTORE.BAT
:LOOP
IF %1!==! GOTO ERROR
ATTRIB +H +R %1
%SWITCH%>NUL
ECHO C:\DOS\ATTRIB -H -R %1
%SWITCH%>>C:\DOS\N
RESTORE.BAT
SHIFT
SHIFT
IF %0!==! GOTO ERROR
FOR %%B IN (NOT Not not)
DO IF %0!==%%B! GOTO LOOP
CALL %0 %1 %2 %3 %4 %5
%6 %7 %8 %9
CALL C:\DOS\NRESTORE
GOTO END
:ERROR
ECHO **ERROR!! NOT
FOUND!!**
:SYNTAX
ECHO Correct syntax: NOT [/S]
FILESPEC1 [NOT FILESPEC2
...] COMMAND
ECHO /S= Protects files in
descendent directories from a
recursive command
SET SWITCH=
DEL C:\DOS\NRESTORE.BAT
:END
```

To save the file, press Alt-F, X, Y. Because the DOS directory is in your path, the NOT command is available from any directory or drive. Note that this batch file creates a file called NRESTORE.BAT in your DOS directory. And because NOT.BAT accepts multiple file parameters, you may issue a command such as: NOT *.EXE NOT *.COM NOT *.BAT DEL *.*

JON R. BAZINET
TEMECULA, CALIFORNIA

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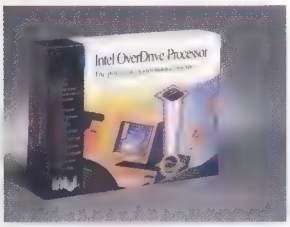

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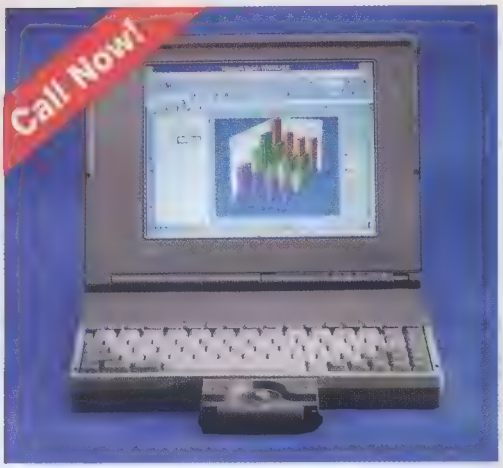

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BATCH DEBUGGING

Problem: *Your batch files keep crashing and you don't know why.*

Solution: MS-DOS 6.2 introduced a batch-file debugging utility: COMMAND /Y/C. To troubleshoot your batch files, create a DOSKEY macro by adding the following line to your AUTOEXEC.BAT file:

```
LH DOSKEY BD=COMMAND
/Y/C $1$2
```

If your system is a 286 or earlier, omit the LH. This macro (BD stands for batch debugger) expects two arguments: the batch filename and its argument. If you have a batch file called WHERES.BAT, you can troubleshoot it by typing BD WHERES *.TXT. Press Y on each line prompt, until you come across the line with the error.

Steve Marston
Glen Oaks, New York

COMPLETE DELETE

Problem: *Deleting hidden, system, and/or read-only files requires an extra step of resetting the file attributes with* **ATTRIB.**

Solution: The DELTREE command in MS-DOS 6.*x* removes more than just directories. It deletes all files and subdirectories in the directory, regardless of their attributes. By typing DELTREE *filename*, you're "tricking" it into treating a filename as a directory. DELTREE will prompt you to confirm the deletion. If you don't want to be prompted for the deletion, add the /Y switch: DELTREE /Y *filename*.

Ken Johnson
Oak Park, Illinois

SYNCHRONIZE FILES

Problem: *You need to synchronize files between two disks or directories.*

Solution: In a text editor such as EDIT, create the following batch file and name it SYNC.BAT:

```
@ECHO off
ECHO Wait...
IF %1!==! GOTO MISSING
IF %2!==! GOTO MISSING
REPLACE %1*.* %2 /A
REPLACE %2*.* %1 /A
REPLACE %1*.* %2 /U
REPLACE %2*.* %1 /U
CLS
ECHO Source and Target are
synchronized!
GOTO END
:MISSING
ECHO Syntax: SYNC [source path]
[target path]
:END
```

This batch file uses the REPLACE command to "fill in" missing files from the source to the target and vice versa, and then updates older versions of files on either path. Note: This procedure does not work on subdirectories, only specified paths. Examples: SYNC A:\ B:\ and SYNC C:\TEMP\ D:\BIN\.

S. G. Hubert
Lahaina, Hawaii

DOS, DOS, OR DOS?

Problem: *You need a way to tell whether you're running Novell DOS, MS-DOS, or IBM's PC DOS.*

Solution: Novell DOS and the old DR DOS both support commands not available in MS-DOS or PC DOS, so batch files you write for them may not run under these DOS versions. With ISNVLDOS.COM, your batch files can figure out which operating system they're running under so you can use Novell DOS's features when they're available. Enter these lines in a text editor and save the file as ISNVLDOS.SCR:

```
N ISNVLDOS.COM
E 0100 B8 52 44 F9 CD 21 73 02
E 0108 32 C0 B4 4C CD 21
RCX
0E
W
Q
```

To generate this file, simply type

```
DEBUG < ISNVLDOS.SCR
```

ISNVLDOS returns a zero if the operating system is MS-DOS or PC DOS. If ISNVLDOS doesn't return a zero, the return code identifies the Novell DOS version number. A return code of 101 (65h in hexadecimal) identifies Version 5.0; 103 (67h in hex) means Version 6.0; and 114 (72h in hex) means Novell DOS 7. With this knowledge, you should be able to use DOS's ERRORLEVEL variable in a batch file to determine which DOS you have.

Jeff Prosise
Contributing Editor

HOT TIP — PASSWORD-PROTECTED SCREEN SAVER

Problem: You want to protect your system against office snoops.

Solution: Here's a password-protected screen saver to baffle even the sophisticated users in your office. The password we use in this example is a combination of an ASCII code and a case-sensitive letter: ±A. Press Alt and tap 241 on the numeric keypad to generate the ± symbol. Even Ctrl-C doesn't terminate this batch file's execution. To create the file, type EDIT LOCK.BAT and enter the following lines:

```
@echo off
cls
echo ←[13;8p←[8m←[5m←[14;35H←[sPassword?
echo ←[15B
CHOICE /C:±/S>NUL
CHOICE /C:A/S>NUL
ECHO ←[0m←[13;13p
cls
```

The ← symbol indicates an escape code. To generate it, press Ctrl-P followed by Esc. If you want to change the password, replace the ± and the A in the CHOICE lines, respectively, with your selection. To make the password longer, add similar CHOICE lines. Note: This batch file works only in DOS 6 or later, and you'll have to load ANSI.SYS.

—Joe McElroy
Mifflinburg, Pennsylvania

USE A WORD PROCESSOR FOR SOME DTP

Desktop Publishing for the Rest of Us

Congratulations—you've been promoted! Part of your new job is producing a monthly newsletter and an annual employee handbook. But before you tear open the FrameMaker or PageMaker or QuarkXPress box, stop and consider the direction you're taking. Are you going to use the program on a full-time basis? How many hours a month do you plan to allocate for these projects? And did you plan to maintain any type of personal life?

Loosely defined, desktop publishing (DTP) is the art of electronic text layout, which, done right, should follow strict style guidelines. Traditionally, this type of computer application used to be exclusively associated with the Macintosh. Thanks to improved PC hardware and software (namely the graphical potential explored by the Windows environment), the distinction between these two platforms is fast disappearing.

If you only do occasional DTP, there's no real need to master these complex programs. You can, in all likelihood, do it all using your favorite word processor. Microsoft Word for Windows, WordPerfect for Windows, and Lotus Ami Pro all offer most of the layout tools you need: Column formatting, landscape printing, tables, borders, and font and graphics support. Both Word and WordPerfect include text manipulation modules (WordArt in Word and TextArt in WordPerfect) allowing you to curve and tilt your words, give them drop-shadow effects, fill patterns, and so on.

In fact, if you primarily produce technical manuals, you're safer with a powerful word processor. In addition to superior text-editing tools (most DTP programs are awkward to edit in), a word processor provides equation editors, footnotes, table of contents generators, and indexing functions.

Have Fun The advantage of using your word processor as a DTP program is obvious: There's nothing new to buy or learn. But for the easiest results, not to mention sheer fun (yes, it *is* possible to enjoy desktop publishing), try Microsoft Publisher. This hot seller offers design Wizards that perform all the layout magic you need in an easy-to-follow, interactive mode. Sure, it doesn't offer the color separation tools necessary for producing *PC Computing*, nor does it have sophisticated letter spacing, but the good news is that you don't even have to know what letter spacing is all about!

Easy as it may seem to the uninitiated, DTP is a science. Strict rules apply, and you should follow them carefully to avoid embarrassing yourself. Here are a few important guidelines for producing professional-looking documents:

- Unless you want the "ransom note" effect, don't mix and match too many fonts and sizes on one page.
- Let go of the old typewriter habits: TOO MUCH UPPERCASE TEXT or too many underlined words are clear indications that you haven't mastered the fine art of italics and boldface.
- Don't overcrowd the page. Leave some white space in strategic locations, such as below the headline and at the margins.
- Avoid using too many boxes on a page.
- To set off a block of text, try a screen (gray shade or even color) instead of a box.
- Select colors carefully for aesthetic balance and visual effect.

In short, simply throwing text onto a page and lacing it with graphics by no means constitutes DTP. Before you produce an amateur newsletter, pick up Roger C. Parker's *Looking Good in Print* (1994), $24.95, or *The Makeover Book* (1989), $17.95, both by Ventana Press, for more dos and don'ts.

If four-color printing isn't within your budget, call Paper Direct at (800) 272-7377. They offer preprinted paper in colors and patterns that elevate regular laser printer output to a work of art, plus a selection of layout templates on disk. YAEL LI-RON

TIPS WORD PROCESSORS

WORD 6.0 FOR WINDOWS

Problem: *You always want to launch Microsoft Word with the last document you were working on.*

Solution: Use the following macro to do just that:

```
Sub MAIN
FileList 1
End Sub
```

To create it, select Tools, Macros, type AutoExec for the name, and select Create. Type FileList 1 and press Ctrl-W to save and exit. Since this is simply an AutoExec macro, it will automatically execute whenever you launch Word.

S.G. HUBERT
LAHAINA, HAWAII

WORDPERFECT FOR WINDOWS

Problem: *You're creating a mail merge and you don't want to make a new file when converting data from your colleagues' word processors.*

Solution: Use a common Ami Pro, Word, or ASCII data file on the network. Instead of selecting Create Data File when creating a merge document, click on Form to create a form file. To do this, go to the Create Form File dialog box and click on the file icon to the right of the input box under Associate a Data File. Under List Files of Type, select All Files (*.*), select the common file on the network, then click OK.

After you've created the form, when you're ready to add a field, click on the Insert Field button on the Merge toolbar. When WordPerfect interrupts you with a Convert File Format dialog box, choose the appropriate format. This way WordPerfect

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will make the data WordPerfect-for-Windows–friendly without hogging a lot of disk space.

WordPerfect Technical Support

Problem: *Selecting a font and changing its size requires many WordPerfect keystrokes and mouse clicks.*

Solution: The following macro will simplify the job by displaying the Font dialog box and calling up the font list:

```
DLGINPUT(On!)
FontDlg
Type ("1")
While (?DialogControl<>Y)
    LOOK(key)
    Type (NTOC(key))
ENDWHILE
EnterKey
```

Click on a font from the list and the macro calls up the Font Size list.

Gordon McComb
Oceanside, California

WORDPERFECT 5.2 FOR WINDOWS

Problem: *WordPerfect 5.2 lacks a clean way to create section heads that stay with the text that follows, even if there's a page break.*

Solution: Combine the Conditional End of Page command with the Styles feature to create section headers that stick with following text. Choose Alt-F8 to bring up the Styles dialog box. Click on Create and type A-Head in the Name field of the Style Properties dialog box, and Level 1 Head in the Description field. Click OK and you'll bring up the Style Editor.

Select Layout, Page, and Conditional End of Page from the drop-down menus. In the dialog box, indicate the number of lines you want to follow the heading before it jumps to the second page (typically at least four) and click on OK. In the Reveal Codes box, note that WordPerfect places the CEOP code before the [Comment] code. Press Enter to insert a hard return before the [Comment]. Add formatting for the heading (bold, font, point size) around the [Comment] code, choose Ctrl-F4 to exit, and click on Close to close the Style Editor.

To insert the breaking heading, highlight the appropriate text, choose Alt-F8 and double-click on A-Head. If fewer than four lines follow the heading, the entire section will start on the next page.

William J. Wolfe
Champaign, Illinois

WORDPERFECT 5.1 FOR DOS

Problem: *Whether you like it or not, tables always get a double border, and you constantly have to change them to your preferred border style.*

Solution: Set a default border: Press Shift-F1, and select Initial Settings, Initial Codes. In the Initial Codes screen, press Shift-F8, select Other, Border Options, Double. Press Enter on Width and Shading, and type 0 for Spacing Between. Press F7 twice to exit the Setup menu. Next time you create a table, it will display with a double border, but when you preview or print it, the line will be single. Note that this default will apply to graphic boxes as well, so if you use double borders for figure boxes, you'll need to change the border type manually each time.

Norma Aiello
Santa Fe, New Mexico

TIPS SPREADSHEETS

LOTUS 1-2-3 FOR DOS

Problem: *You're four levels down in the 1-2-3 menu maze and you need a quick way out.*

Solution: The Lotus manuals have always told you to press Esc once for each level you wish to exit, but there's an easier way: Press Ctrl-Break, which gets you clear out of the menu system back to the Ready mode.

Mark Colen
Aptos, California

QUATTRO PRO 5.0 FOR WINDOWS

Problem: *You don't want Quattro Pro to autoload a file when it starts.*

Solution: By default, Quattro Pro looks for the file QUATTRO.WB1 to autoload when it starts. If you don't want to open any file—not even a blank notebook—when you start Quattro Pro, create a startup macro that closes the file as soon as it runs. To create that macro, type {FileClose} in cell A1, then select Block, Name, Create, and name it \0

HOT TIP WORD 6.0 FOR WINDOWS

Problem: You want to launch an application such as your encyclopedia from within Word without switching to Program Manager.

Solution: Add a button to your toolbar that launches the program you need. Create a one-line macro with

```
Shell "c:\path\program.exe c:\path\file.doc"
```

between the Sub Main and End Sub lines. Replace c:\path\program.exe with the program you want to launch and c:\path\file.doc with the file you want to load at startup. For instance, to load the original Microsoft Multimedia CD viewer along with the Encarta encyclopedia, type:

```
Shell "c:\viewer\viewer.exe e:\books\encyc92.mvb"
```

Right mouse click on the toolbar and select Customize from the menu. On the Toolbars tab, scroll down the Categories list and highlight Macros. In the resulting list of macros, highlight your macro's name, drag it to the toolbar, and choose a button from the Custom Button list. Click on Assign and you're off. Next time you need the application, click on the button and it'll launch the application with any file you specified.

—WOODY LEONHARD
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

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(the autoexec macro name). Save the file as QUATTRO (the WB1 extension will be added automatically).

BORLAND INTERNATIONAL TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Problem: *You need to apply the same formatting attributes to several notebooks at a time.*

Solution: Click on the first notebook tab you wish to edit, then Shift-click on the last one. Note that the group is marked with a line under the tabs. Select F12 (Properties), and apply the formatting you like. Note that unlike every other section of Quattro Pro, clicking on the right-mouse button while the group is selected does *not* bring up the appropriate Properties pop-up menu.

JOSHUA LUBOSHITZ
EL PASO, TEXAS

QUATTRO PRO FOR DOS

Problem: *You can't tell what the cryptic Printer Setup Strings mean.*

Solution: If you print a lot of character-mode reports (not to the graphic printer, which downloads fonts), you must have used some Setup Strings for condensing print or setting a different paper size. These strings always start with \027 (the escape code), followed by a nonsensical line of other codes. The specific codes are listed in your printer manual, but if it's been a while since you wrote that setup string, you may not remember what any of it means. There's an easy solution which most people overlook. You can document your Setup String by adding identifying text to it. For example, for IBM Proprinter emulation, type the following setup string in the first cell of the first row in a print block:

```
\027\058\027\048 (IBM mode, 8↲
↳lpi, 12 cpi) \024
```

The identifying text (in the parentheses) won't print because of the "clear data" code, \024, that follows it. If you omit the \024, that text will print at the beginning of your print block.

DAVE MUNROE
MONTGOMERY, OHIO

LOTUS 1-2-3 FOR WINDOWS

Problem: *You want to include your spreadsheet's filename in the printout.*

Solution: Type the following formula anywhere in the worksheet:

```
@REPLACE(@CELL("filename"↲
↳,A1),0,@LENGTH(@INFO↲
↳("directory")),"")
```

(Substitute your own filename and directory in the formula.) The filename will now appear in that cell.

SHANE DEVENSHIRE
WALNUT CREEK, CALIFORNIA

MICROSOFT EXCEL 4.0

Problem: *The COUNT function in Excel returns the number of cells containing values, not labels.*

Solution: Let's say the range you want to count is C8:C197. Type the following formula where you want to display the count and press Ctrl-Shift-Enter to enter it as an array:

```
=SUM((IF(ISERROR(CODE↲
↳(C8:C197)),0,CODE(C8:C197))↲
↳>64)*(IF(ISERROR(CODE↲
↳(C8:C197)),0,CODE(C8:C197))↲
↳<123))
```

Any blank cells or cells containing values will be ignored.

DAVID HAGER
BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA

TIPS DATABASES

MICROSOFT ACCESS 1.1

Problem: *Access creates a single MDB file that contains data as well as forms, reports, and so on.*

Solution: If you distribute application upgrades to users, every new MDB will overwrite their existing data. To avoid this, set up your application in two database files, one for tables and another for forms, reports, and modules. To link the databases, select File, Attach Table. When you distribute the application, don't include the database that holds the tables. At the receiving end, the user should update the link with File, Attach Table.

CHARLES M. OLSEN
DICKINSON, TEXAS

Problem: *You want to assign serial numbers to your records in a report.*

Solution: Create an Unbound Text Box at the left margin of the detail area. Select View, Properties, and type =1 in the Control Source box of the Properties menu. Click on the down arrow button next to the Running Sum box and select Over All. If the report is grouped, select Over Group, and the running numbers will reset for each group.

GWYNNE CORDOVA
EVANSVILLE, INDIANA

dBASE IV

Problem: *Every time you modify the database structure, you need to change memory variables declared in your program and recompile the program.*

Solution: Declaring a variable as "*name* = SPACE(35)" in a data entry program may work against you if you increase the width of the NAME field in the database file. Instead, use the "phantom" record—the empty record always present at the end of the

HOT TIP MICROSOFT EXCEL 5.0

Problem: You need to count the number of times a certain label appears within a range.

Solution: First name the range from which you need to extract this data. Then block the range and select Insert, Name, Define, type DATA, and press Enter. Now create a column of entries, containing all the labels you wish to count. If the column starts in cell B7, type the following formula in cell C7:

```
=SUM((DATA=B7)*1)
```

Press Ctrl-Shift-Enter to enter it as an array formula. To copy the formula down, drag the fill handle to the bottom of the range and press Enter.

—SHANE DEVENSHIRE
WALNUT CREEK, CALIFORNIA

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database—to get the characteristics of the field represented by a memory variable. The phantom record is accessible when EOF() is true. Go to the bottom of the file and perform a SKIP:

```
USE Student
GO BOTTOM
SKIP IIF(EOF(),0,1)
name = Student->name
```

If the database has no records, EOF() will be true after the GO BOTTOM command, and issuing a SKIP will result in an "End of File Encountered."

ROGER W. SAUER
FAIRFIELD, CALIFORNIA

Problem: *Creating or removing directories from within a dBASE program with the ! command disturbs the display, resulting in partial DOS screens.*

Solution: For a cleaner solution, call up the following BIN files from within your program. To create them, use MODIFY COMMAND or another text editor, and save the first as MKDIR.SCR and the second as RMDIR.SCR:

```
N MKDIR.BIN
E 0100 B4 39 89 DA CD 21 72 04
E 0108 B4 59 88 27 CB
R CX
D
W
Q

N RMDIR.BIN
E 0100 B4 3A 89 DA CD 21 72 04
E 0108 B4 59 88 27 CB
R CX
D
W
Q
```

MKDIR tries to create the directory whose name you've placed into a variable. If successful, it replaces the first character of the variable with a value of Y. RMDIR does the same when it deletes the specified directory. Here's an example of MKDIR's usage:

```
LOAD MKDIR
DIR_NAME = "C:\TEST_DIR"
CALL MKDIR WITH DIR_NAME
IF LEFT(DIR_NAME,1) = "Y"
DIR_NAME = "C:\TEST_DIR"
ELSE
? "Unable to create directory — ↵
↳ directory may already exist"
ENDIF
RELEASE MODULE MKDIR
```

ROGER W. SAUER
FAIRFIELD, CALIFORNIA

TIPS DESKTOP PUBLISHING

QUARKXPRESS 3.12 FOR WINDOWS

Problem: *Recreating a master page in a new document is time-consuming.*

Solution: Copy a master page from one document to another. Here's how: Create two new documents. Reduce both documents to thumbnail views by selecting View, Thumbnail for both. Now drag a page from the first document to the second—the master page from the first document comes along for the ride. In the second document, delete the copied page by selecting Page, Delete and typing the number of the copied page. While this deletes the copied page, its master page remains in the second document.

BOB WEIBEL
ASHLAND, OREGON

Problem: *Colleagues complain when you reset the preferences on the office's DTP system to accommodate your own needs.*

Solution: Swap your preferences with the default values each time you use QuarkXPress. In Windows' File Manager, copy the file XPRESS.PRF in the XPRESS directory to a file called DEFAULT.PRF. Start QuarkXPress, make changes to your tracking and kerning tables, then add any special items to your hyphenation and justification settings. Exit QuarkXPress and return to File Manager. Copy XPRESS.PRF to MY.PRF and DEFAULT.PRF back to XPRESS.PRF. Swap these configurations before you start and after you finish using QuarkXPress—you'll keep working the way you prefer without upsetting your colleagues' configurations.

BOB WEIBEL
ASHLAND, OREGON

Problem: *Selecting Fit in Window on a VGA display centers only the left page of a two-page spread.*

Solution: Fit the whole spread onscreen by holding down the Ctrl key while selecting Fit in Window. QuarkXPress displays a reduced view extending to the width of the Pasteboard. If you don't need the Pasteboard, increase the size of the view by entering zero percent in the Pasteboard Width field of the Application Preferences dialog box.

BOB WEIBEL
ASHLAND, OREGON

HOT TIP MICROSOFT PUBLISHER 2.0

Problem: Once you create text in WordArt, there's no easy way to edit it.

Solution: After using WordArt's drop-shadow, fill-pattern, curve, and rotation features, edit your creation in Microsoft Draw. First, create a WordArt frame and add all the special effects you want. Select the frame by clicking outside the frame and then single-clicking on it. Handlebars indicate that the frame is selected. Press Ctrl-C to copy the contents of the frame to the Clipboard.

Next, select Edit, Insert Object, highlight Microsoft Draw, and click OK. In the maximized Draw screen, press Ctrl-V to paste the text. The entire text is selected as one object, so click outside the block to deselect it. Now you can edit each letter or drop shadow as a separate object. Click once on each object, and resize, repaint, or move it. Double-click on an object to crop and completely modify its shape.

Exit Draw and click on Yes to Update "Untitled." This returns you to an updated WordArt frame back in Publisher. Note: The text frame is no longer a WordArt object, but is now a Draw object in WordArt. Since Draw is an OLE application, double-click on this object to launch Draw.

—YAEL LI-RON
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

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TAKE THE GUESSWORK OUT OF BUYING A SERVER

Heresy or Fact: You Don't Need a Pentium

It's a pleasant Tuesday afternoon. You're standing by the office water cooler, relaxing and sipping. The boss approaches with a small smile. Uh-oh. "Hey [insert your name here]. You know something about networks, right?" How much of your salary depends on this answer? "Um, kind of." Couldn't be that hard. "Great! We need to add a new server. By next Monday. You're not too busy, are you?" Why yes, in fact, you are. "Uh, no. No problem."

Necessity is the mother of network managers. What do you do now? Well, first and foremost, don't rush out and buy the biggest, baddest Pentium server you can find: It's definitely possible to run 25 or even 50 users on a 33MHz 386. Before resigning yourself to buying a new server, try a few of our tricks. If they're not enough, follow our advice for building a server from scratch.

I/O, I/O When it comes to server CPUs, bigger isn't necessarily better. That's because Novell NetWare's bottleneck pecking order runs something like this: disk drive, network interface card, CPU. That is, the first bottleneck is caused by a slow disk drive, the second by too few network interface cards. Then and only then can you point the finger at the CPU. Here's how to get around those bottlenecks.

• Add memory. Except for the 4MB that NetWare uses, every scrap of memory in your server goes to a disk cache. You can pull data out of a cache hundreds of times faster than you can pull it off the disk.

How much cache is enough? Depends on who you ask. If you follow the guidelines in the NetWare manual, you'll have 8MB of RAM for a system with 500MB of disk space. Here's what we think: RAM is probably the cheapest, easiest upgrade you can get, so find a deal on SIMMs and double whatever Novell's formula recommends.

• Stripe two disk drives. If you find that adding memory doesn't do much for performance, you may be filling the cache. Drive striping makes two drives appear as one, and it interleaves the sectors of the first disk drive with the sectors of the second so you get higher performance.

• Add a network interface card (NIC). If you have only 8 or 10 users, skip to the next paragraph. If the number is somewhere around 20 users—particularly with Ethernet—think about adding another NIC and dividing the load between the two. Reducing the load on any one segment will boost throughput at both the network wire level and at the server level.

• Tune the server? Good luck. Before NetWare 3.0, you could fiddle and tweak all sorts of things to boost a server's performance. Ah, those were the good old days of job security. Now NetWare does a lot of tweaking by itself. Most of what you can tune doesn't affect the server's performance all that much. If you play around with the data block size (it ranges from 4K to 64K) you may see a performance boost, but the larger you make the blocks, the more space you'll waste if you deal with small files.

• Add another disk controller? Don't bother. No matter how hard you try, adding a second disk controller to a system—even a heavily loaded one—won't boost performance that much. Save your money, unless you want to scrap your current controller and bring in a caching one. But more on that later.

Server from Scratch So none of that worked, eh? The boss still wants a new server? Same here. Don't worry, you haven't read this far for nothing: Everything we just laid out applies doubly to new servers. Here's what else you need to know to equip a new server.

• Hold off on that Pentium purchase. You just don't need one: Tests at ZD Labs have shown that a 66MHz 486 will support 120 clients very, very comfortably. Heck, a 33MHz 486 came in only about 2 percent slower than the 66MHz 486.

I'm a curious sort, so I called around to several of the major server vendors, and I asked them to outfit two servers: one with a 66MHz 486, the other with a Pentium/60. Everything else was the same. The price difference between the two types of systems would buy you another 16MB of RAM or another gigabyte of disk space, and still leave you with some cash (see "A Pentium Equals

BEST BUY A PENTIUM EQUALS 16MB OF RAM

Vendor	60MHz Pentium with 16MB of RAM	66MHz 486 with 32MB of RAM	486 Price Advantage
Compaq	$8,200	$7,800	$400
Dell	$7,600	$7,300	$300

Pentium vs. RAM? When you're talking bang for the buck in a file server, the answer is RAM. We configured two nearly identical systems (inexpensive monitor, one Ethernet card, 1GB of disk space), but put 32MB of RAM and a 66MHz 486 in one and 16MB of RAM and a 60MHz Pentium in the other. You know that when you add RAM to a file server, its performance improves. In fact, a 486 with 32MB of RAM will usually give you better server performance than a Pentium with 16MB of RAM. And it costs less.

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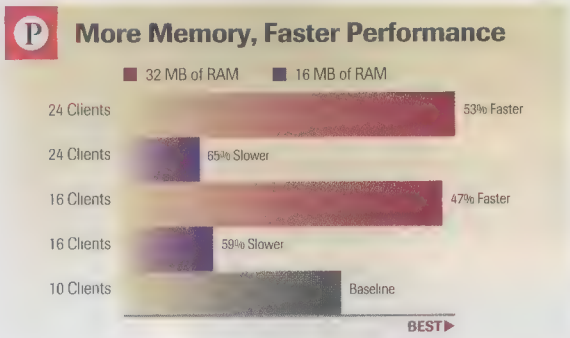
FACE OFF RAM IS THE BEST INVESTMENT YOU CAN MAKE

16MB of RAM: ZD Labs' Netbench, a file server benchmark, demonstrates just how much performance you stand to gain by doubling your server's RAM from 16MB to 32MB.



16MB of RAM," page 208). So save your money: Unless you're planning on having 250 users on a single file server, you don't need a Pentium. Database servers are another matter entirely. I'll cover them in a future column.

• Take a fast bus. Repeat after me: ISA bad. S-l-o-w. The server you buy should have an EISA bus. Micro Channel? You're joking, right? Sure, it's fast. Sure, it supports Plug and Play (while NetWare doesn't). But you'll find a much wider selection of cards for EISA (which also supports ISA, by the way, if you really need it), and a much wider array of system vendors building servers around EISA. With its 33-megabyte-per-second (MBps) burst mode, EISA is definitely fast enough to handle Ethernet or Token Ring traffic, Fast SCSI disks, and just about anything else you can plug in to it today.

Tomorrow, however, is a different matter altogether. If your future network plans include FDDI or 100-megabit-per-second (Mbps) Ethernet or 155MBps Asynchronous Transfer Mode, you might want to look into one of the new 132MBps buses: either PCI or VL-bus. The jury is still out on which one is better (for today's Ethernet speeds, EISA beats them both). But our tests have shown that both PCI and VL-bus have similar performance and behavior characteristics.

• Dial for disk drives. You want Fast SCSI-2 drives with low seek and access times. At 2GB and an access time under 13ms, the Seagate Barracuda III is a good example. Do you want to plug it in to a caching SCSI controller, such as those made by DPT? There's a lot of controversy over whether a hardware cache makes a difference. Personally, I've seen no performance difference on our small network, but I'm willing to be convinced.

• Save yourself in the NIC of time. All NICs are not created equal: Some are more expensive than others. Choose a card that supports full-duplex Ethernet, which uses all four wires in your 10Base-T lines to pass data from hub to server and from server to hub simultaneously. You'll need a switching hub that supports it, too, such as those from Kalpana. For this, I recommend Compaq's NetFlex—it's around $400, but its bus mastering takes a big load off your CPU. When I'm feeling stingy, I like the 3Com EtherLink III 3C579: It's fast, not horribly expensive (less than $300), and easy to install.

So much for the hardware. Next month: The secrets of buying NetWare for your new server. JOHN MONTGOMERY

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You're on the Internet, but FTP is just too confusing. Sure, there are a million versions of Gopher floating around, but this one's special. First and foremost, it's multithreaded: You can run up to three searches at once. You'll also enjoy the interface, which supports right-mouse button menus and clever bookmarks so that you can return to your favorite places easily. Download GOPHER.ZIP from PC Contact's data library 3 (Utilities/Misc.) or see page 228 to order a disk from Public Brand Software.

NET TIPS

WINDOWS FOR WORKGROUPS

Problem: *The Windows for Workgroups installation removes NetBIOS from your SYSTEM.INI, making applications such as Lotus Notes nonfunctional.*

Solution: Add it back in. Edit SYSTEM.INI with any text editor, and go to the [Network] section. Add the line Exclude=0 anywhere in this section. This line tells Windows for Workgroups not to use Novell's NetBIOS. Now go to the [386Enh] section, and add the line V86ModelLANAs=0. This line tells Windows for Workgroups that NetBIOS will use logical network number 0 for its real mode communication. Now, make sure that NETBIOS.EXE gets loaded in your AUTOEXEC.BAT (after your NET START command) and you're finished.

BEN WEISS
NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Problem: *Your Windows for Workgroups client always gets bogged down whenever anyone uses it as a server.*

Solution: Give client operation more CPU time. Open the Control Panel, and double-click on the Network icon. Adjust the slider control in the Network Settings dialog box so that nearly 100 percent of the system's processing time is given to foreground activity.

DAN DOHAN
SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA

NETWARE 3.1*x*

Problem: *You upgraded to NetWare 3.12 from NetWare 3.11, and you can no longer communicate with your fax server or other network hardware.*

Solution: Chances are you don't have the 802.3 frame type loaded on your network card. NetWare 3.12 stopped using 802.3 as the default frame type, opting instead

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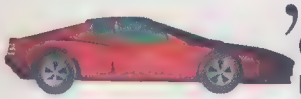
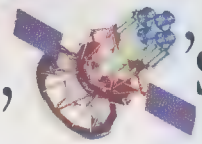
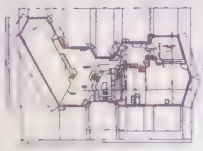
Yes, you can do Windows™ and walls and doors and floors, ceilings, whole 's,  's, trains, boats, 's, chains, 's, diamond rings, 's and things,  's, power plants, topo maps,  's, helicopters, roads and bridges, circuit boards, 's power lines, 's, airports, furniture, digital terrain models, 's, skateboards, the , 's, chemical plants, 's, golf courses, anything you can think of ... even the kitchen

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for 802.2. To load the right frame type, go to the system console and type LOAD *driver* FRAME=ETHERNET_802.3 where *driver* is the name of the driver for your server's network interface card. After you answer some questions (yes, you do want to add another frame type to a previously loaded board), type BIND IPX TO *driver* so that NetWare's IPX protocol will run with 802.3. That should take care of your compatibility problems.

JANE IRELAND
PEORIA, ILLINOIS

Problem: *You're installing Windows on a NetWare client and it freezes when you run Windows Setup.*

Solution: NetWare's broadcast messages cause the client to interrupt the installation and wait for you to press Ctrl-Enter. The solution is to run NetWare's CASTOFF command before you run Setup.

S.G. HUBERT
LAHAINA, HAWAII

Problem: *You would like to make the CD-ROM drive on your NetWare server available to DOS and Windows clients.*

Solution: If you have NetWare 3.11, you'll need a third-party utility. However, NetWare 3.12 users are in luck. First load the NetWare-supplied driver for your hard disk controller. Next, load the Advanced SCSI Programming Interface (ASPI) driver that your hard disk controller requires. It probably has a name such as CPQASPI.DSK or ASPICD.DSK. Now just type LOAD CDROM.NLM. You should see a list of the CD-ROM drives on your system. To make the CD appear as a DOS client volume, go to the server prompt and type CD MOUNT *N* (where *N* is the drive number for the CD). DOS and Windows clients should now see the CD as another network disk drive.

BEN LOEB
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

HOT TIP NEW NETWARE CLIENT

Problem: You've just upgraded your NetWare clients to Novell's latest VLM driver software and your drive mappings don't work.

Solution: The Virtual Loadable Module (VLM) drivers require a change to each client's LASTDRIVE statement in CONFIG.SYS. Edit CONFIG.SYS with your favorite text editor and change the LASTDRIVE line so that it reads: LASTDRIVE=Z. If this line isn't already there, then add it. Your clients should no longer have problems with drive mappings.

—JANE IRELAND
PEORIA, ILLINOIS

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yes
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VISIO AND VISUAL BASIC DO THE TEXAS TWO-STEP

A Lean, Mean Business Card Machine

Dear Vince and Woody: I just read your column on vampires and the Rocky Horror Picture Show. Cool. It's really neat that you guys write for people on the cutting edge, instead of those old mainframe fuzzheads who are still locked in a sequential world. Hey, my dad keeps talking about a national speed limit on the Information Superhighway. Uncle Al thinks an Environment Division is part of a COBOL program. Gag me with a RAMDAC.

Oh. Ixnay on the TV jokes, OK? Some adult is going to catch on and get you guys in hot water. If Aunt Tipper yanked *PC Computing*'s PG-13 rating, I'd have to sneak my favorite computer mag in with the *National Geographics*. Bummer.
Sincerely, Chelsea

Back to Business Last month in this column we drove a stake into the heart of Shapeware's Visio 2.0 and identified the components of its business card "shape." If you missed that issue, not to worry: This month's installment just uses the names we found as though they were documented somewhere other than in last month's column—which they aren't.

Finding those components is the hard part. Once you have that information, constructing the business card engine is so simple it's embarrassing. All you have to do is choose the pieces and hook them together with a few lines of Visual Basic glue.

Programmers have been talking about reusable code for decades; it's something of a Hacker's Holy Grail, an underpinning of the object-oriented milieu. Watch closely as we tie together Visual Basic and Visio. Strictly speaking, we aren't reusing code. But in a very important sense, we are reusing. . . things. Globs. Pieces. Objects, for lack of a better term. This is the future of Windows programming: little bits of custom glue—BASIC programs comprehensible to mere mortals—that tie together well-designed, malleable, reusable chunks of Windows applications.

So much for philosophy. Let's get our hands dirty. Crank up Visio 2.0, choosing the Forms template. Click on the business card stencil, the one at the bottom right. Drag it over to the new Visio document.

If you have a logo you'd like to put on your business cards, click on File, then Import, and bring it in. Resize and move the logo to the card, wherever you like best. Once you have a single business card set up the way you want it, click on Edit, then Select All. Hold down the Ctrl key and drag with the mouse to create the second business card. Then hold down the Ctrl key again and drag to create the third. Repeat this procedure until you have all the business cards you want, positioned correctly on the page. Click on File, then Save, and give your business card document a name.

Now get Visual Basic 3.0 going. We need to create a form that will hold the Visio business card information. Double-click on the capital *A* icon to set up each of three labels (Company Name, Employee, and Address). Double-click on the *AB*-in-a-box icon to put each of three text boxes on the form. Make sure that the second and third text boxes have the MultiLine property enabled (select the box, hit F4, and change the MultiLine property to True).

Next, double-click on the oval icon and put a push button on the form. Type Get Business Card or some such. Then double-click on the oval icon again and put a second push button on the form; call this one Update Business Card.

Double-click on the Get Business Card button and type in the program shown in "Visual Basic's All Business," below. It retrieves the current settings on the first business card. The program takes all of about 10 lines—well, 11. You also have to create the function in "L2C$()," page 216. When you've finished the retrieval side, double-click on the Update Business Card button and type in the second program in "Beneath the Button," page 216. It loops through all the business cards, setting the blocks on the cards to

HOW TO DO IT VISUAL BASIC'S ALL **BUSINESS**

Here's the code for your Get Business Card button in Visual Basic.

```
Sub Command1_Click ()
Dim MyVisio As Object
Dim BusCard As Object
Set MyVisio = GetObject(, "visio.application")
Set BusCard = MyVisio.ActivePage.shapes
If BusCard.Count > 0 Then
Text1.Text = L2C$(BusCard(1).shapes(3).Text)
Text2.Text = L2C$(BusCard(1).shapes(4).Text)
Text3.Text = L2C$(BusCard(1).shapes(5).Text)
End If
End Sub
```

The GetObject command in the fourth line, above, hitches this program up to Visio. Then BusCard gets attached to the "shapes" on the current page. BusCard.Count returns the number of shapes. The text within the business card—for reasons known only to Shapeware—comes back in shapes(3), shapes(4), and shapes(5). To learn more about the function we've created, see "L2C$()," page 216.

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HOW TO DO IT BENEATH THE BUTTON

Here's the program that lurks beneath the Update Business Card button. Double-click on the Update Business Card button and type:

```
Sub Command2_Click ()
Dim OhVisio As Object
Dim BusCard As Object
Set OhVisio = GetObject(, "visio.application")
Set BusCard = OhVisio.ActivePage.shapes
For i = 1 To BusCard.Count
BusCard(i).shapes(3).Text = Text1.Text
BusCard(i).shapes(4).Text = Text2.Text
BusCard(i).shapes(5).Text = Text3.Text
Next i
End Sub
```

Note: Any extra picture creates an OhVisio.ActivePage.shapes entry that you have to skip in the For loop. So if you've included a logo, change the For i = line to For i = 1 To BusCard.Count Step 2.

the values that have been typed in to the Visual Basic form. This program, too, weighs in at just 11 lines, once you figure out how to do it. Amazing.

Save your Visual Basic program so it doesn't get clobbered if Windows suddenly decides to fly south. Make sure Visio is running with your business card document open, then try running Visual Basic by clicking on the right-wedgie button. See how you can pick up the current value of each of the three blocks in the first business card? And see how you can change the value of the three blocks in all of the business cards, with just one click? Magic.

Making Magic Here's the cool part: You can make this Visual Basic program part of Visio itself! Save and close down Visio. Then from inside Visual Basic, click on File, then Make EXE File, and give your program a name like WIZBIZ.EXE. Shut down Visual Basic and flip over to File Manager. Move the WIZBIZ.EXE file into the Visio subdirectory called \ADD-ONS.

Now start Visio again. Bring up your business card document—it's probably first on the list of files on the File menu. Select Window, Run Add-on, double-click on WIZBIZ.EXE, and wham! Your Visual Basic program, now integrated into Visio, is poised and ready to do your bidding.

This is the way to do a macro language. Why spend hundreds of organism-years inventing a stunted, incompatible, proprietary kludge of a language and shoehorn it into an application? (Yes, we mean VBA.) Shapeware did it right, except for the lousy documentation and the lack of hooks into the menus, shortcut keys, toolbox icons, and a few other things. Little ol' Visio has a macro language that's several orders of magnitude more powerful than monster VBA/EXCEL: It's called Visual Basic.

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PATCH L2C$()

To get the Get Business Card macro to work, we had to create a little kludge called L2C$() to stick extra Chr$(13)s in the text wherever there's a Chr$(10). In the window where you're typing the Get Business Card macro program, click on the Object: list, and pick (general). When the Proc: list shows (declarations), type in this little program:

```
Function L2C$ (ByVal
Instring$)
For i = 1 To Len(Instring$)
If Mid$(Instring$, i, 1) =
Chr$(10) Then a$ = a$ +
Chr$(13)
a$ = a$ + Mid$(Instring$, i, 1)
Next i
L2C$ = a$
End Function
```

TOOL TIPS

WINDOWS DEBUGGING

Problem: *You want a clever way to see what your program is doing as you run it in debug mode.*

Solution: As you debug Windows applications written using Microsoft's Windows SDK, don't forget about Windows' little-known OutputDebugString function. It displays a text string on the debugging terminal. The statement

```
OutputDebugString ("Init
complete; calling
ShowWindow\n");
```

outputs the string enclosed in quotation marks to the debug terminal. Used in this manner, OutputDebugString constitutes a simple debugging facility similar to the PRINT statement in BASIC and the printf function in C. By placing calls to OutputDebugString in strategic locations throughout your program, you can see what branches the program is taking and what messages it is processing.

If you need to include numeric information in the output from OutputDebugString, use Windows' wsprintf function to format text strings prior to displaying them. It works like C's sprintf function but doesn't increase your code size. The statements

```
wsprintf (szBuffer, "The window
handle is %u\n", hwnd);
OutputDebugString (szBuffer);
```

convert the window handle stored in hwnd to ASCII form and output the resulting string.

JEFF PROSISE
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

DOS PRINTING

Problem: *You need a routine to check on a printer's status.*

Solution: An easy way to make sure the printer is ready is to invoke the BIOS's interrupt 17h, function 02h: Get Printer Status service. Function 02h returns an 8-bit value in ah that reflects the status of the printer. On most systems, ah returns with bit 3

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Help TOOLKIT TIPS: Convert Binary Numbers to ASCII in Assembly Language

set if the printer is not turned on, if the printer is turned on but is currently offline, or if there is no printer attached to the specified parallel port. In assembly language, the following code checks the printer attached to parallel port LPT1 and branches to an error handler if the printer is not ready:

```
mov ah,02h
mov dx,00h
int 17h
test ah,08h
jnz error
```

The value in dx specifies the printer port: 00h for LPT1, 01h for LPT2, and 02h for LPT3. A well-written routine should also branch to an error handler if bit 5 is set. Bit 5, if set, indicates that the printer is out of paper. If bits 3 and 5 are clear, it's safe to go. A modified version of the above routine that checks bits 3 and 5 looks like this:

```
mov ah,02h
mov dx,00h
int 17h
test ah,28h
jnz error
```

Do not wait for a zero return in ah, or your program could get stuck in an infinite loop. Bit 7 will be set when the printer is ready to accept characters.

JEFF PROSISE
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

DOS ASSEMBLER

Problem: *In assembly language, printing numbers is no trivial matter.*

Solution: In high-level languages such as BASIC and C, it is easy to display numbers onscreen. To display a 1024 in BASIC, you'd simply type PRINT 1024. In C, the command is printf ("%d", 1024).

In assembly language, the programmer must perform the binary-to-ASCII conversion, because there are no built-in functions to do it automatically. Here is a simple and efficient routine for displaying numbers as large as 65,535 (the largest number that

HOT TIP — WINDOWS GRAPHICS

Problem: You need a program that lets you write outside of your window's client area.

Solution: It's not a great idea to write to areas outside your windows, but if you're writing a screen saver, for example, you may need to. BeginPaint and GetWindowDC() won't do—you need CreateDC(). Here's how to use it in C:

```
hdc = CreateDC
("DISPLAY", NULL,
NULL, NULL);
```

And if you need to retrieve a device context for the entire screen, call GetDC with a NULL parameter—it's undocumented, but it works.

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CHARLEMONT, MASSACHUSETTS

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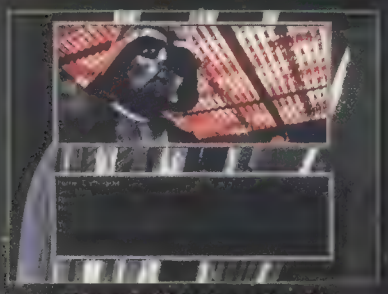

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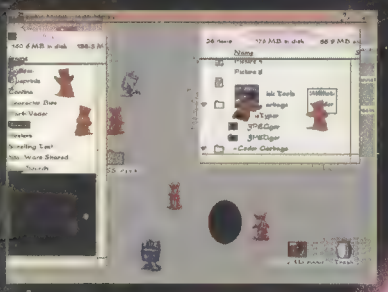

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can be represented with a 16-bit value) on the screen:

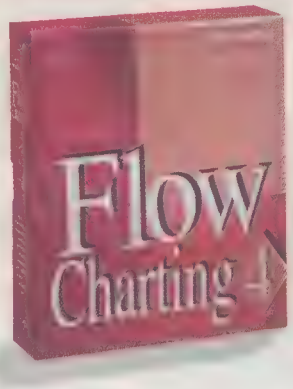
```
mov bx,10
xor cx,cx
label1: inc cx
xor dx,dx
div bx
push dx
or ax,ax
jnz label1
label2: pop dx
add dl,30h
mov ah,2
int 21h
loop label2
```

On entry to this routine, ax holds the integer value to be printed. After the conversion is performed and the ASCII characters constituting the number are placed on the stack, DOS function 02h is used to output each character to the standard output device (by default, the screen) as it's popped off the stack. If you encapsulate this routine into a procedure named printnum, you can print the number 1024 with the following instructions:

```
mov ax,1024
call printnum
```

That's almost as easy as having a high-level language to do your bidding.

JEFF PROSISE
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR



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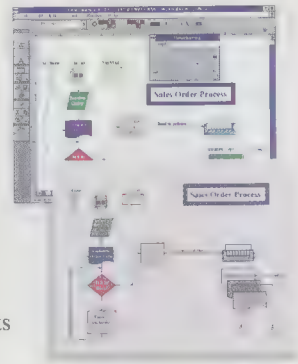

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WINDOWS CONFIGURATION

Problem: *You want to be able to store all the configuration information for your application in an unobtrusive yet easily accessible location.*

Solution: Here's a simple solution: Rather than store a private INI file in the Windows directory, store it in the directory in which your program resides. The name and location of a program's executable file are easily obtained with Windows' GetModuleFileName function. Once you have in hand a string specifying the executable file, simply replacing the EXE extension at the end of the string with the letters INI creates a specification for an INI file in the program's own directory. It's not at all complicated. In fact, it can be accomplished with three lines of code:

```
i = GetModuleFileName
  (hInstance, szIniFile, sizeof
  (szIniFile));
while (szIniFile[i—] != 0x2E);
    lstrcpy (&szIniFile[i+2], "INI");
```

The first line copies the executable filename to the buffer szIniFile. The second scans backward from the end of the string to locate the period preceding the filename extension, and the third replaces the existing extension with INI. Pass the resulting string as the fourth parameter to the WritePrivateProfileString function and your INI file will be created in your directory rather than the Windows directory.

JEFF PROSISE
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

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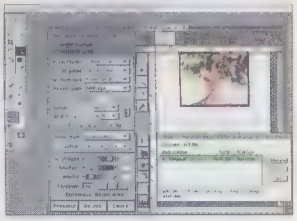

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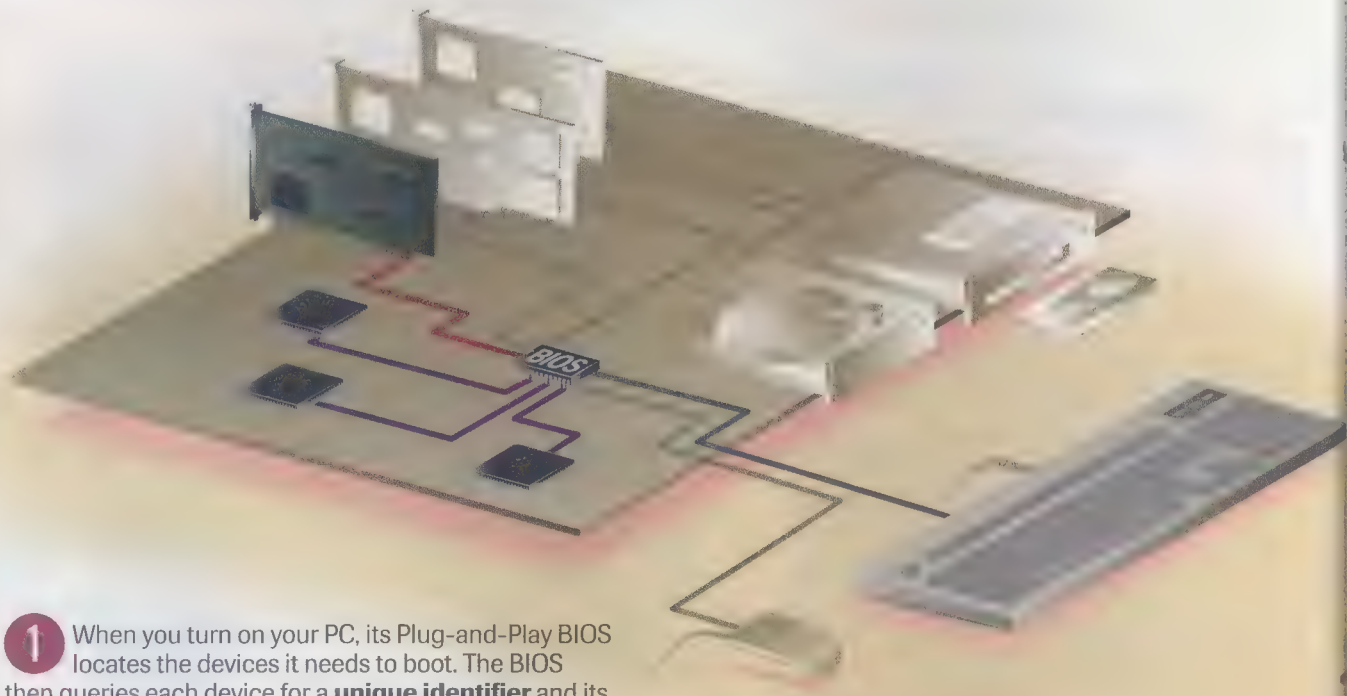
How It Works

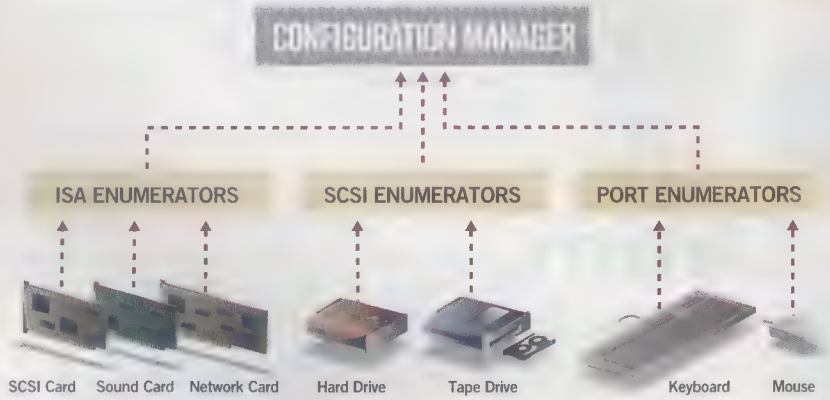
BY RON WHITE
ILLUSTRATED BY
TIMOTHY EDWARD DOWNS

Plug and Play

Think of it as digital aspirin. The new Plug-and-Play standard lets you add peripherals to your system without worrying about jumpers, dip switches, or any other hardware arcana. Plug and Play configures your PC for you—so you can get work done, instead of working on your computer.



1 When you turn on your PC, its Plug-and-Play BIOS locates the devices it needs to boot. The BIOS then queries each device for a **unique identifier** and its **system resource** requirements. Next the BIOS resolves any resource conflicts among these devices. Devices not required to boot the PC are not yet activated.



2 When the operating system loads, the **configuration manager** asks the **bus enumerators** to identify all the devices they're responsible for and the system resources that those devices require. The enumerators get the information directly from the devices or, if a device is not a Plug-and-Play component, the information comes from a central database that you create manually in advance. The configuration manager stores the information from the bus enumerators in the **hardware tree.**

Neither Rain, nor Sleet, nor IRQ Conflict Shall Keep Your System Down

3 The configuration manager loads a driver for each of the devices in the hardware tree but instructs the devices to await the assignment of specific resources. Then, using the information in the hardware tree, the **resource arbitrator** devises a plan for assigning resources. It starts with the least flexible device and ends with the device that is most flexible in the resources it can use.

4 Finally, the configuration manager tells the enumerators what resources it allocated to their devices. The enumerators tell their devices what resources they can use by writing that information to the devices' memory registers, and startup is complete. As you work, the BIOS and configuration manager continually watch for new devices.

KEY WORDS

Unique Identifiers: These numbers are burned into Plug-and-Play devices' ROM and act like mailing addresses for configuration information.

System Resources: These include interrupts, I/O ports, and direct memory access addresses. Resource conflicts occur when one device attempts to use the same interrupt or port or direct memory access address that another device is using.

Configuration Manager: The central figure during all phases of operation, it controls and communicates with all the Plug-and-Play processes.

Bus Enumerators: These are special drivers that act as the interface between the operating system and hardware components of the system, such as the ISA bus, the PCMCIA socket and the SCSI bus, which connect several devices. During installation, Windows (or the Plug-and-Play OS) automatically determines how the bus enumerators are configured.

Hardware Tree: Your system needs to keep a record in RAM of the current system configuration. This record is your hardware tree. It is drawn from a central database of configuration information about all devices associated with a particular system, whether they are currently installed or not.

Resource Arbitrator: This utility contains all the information about the workings of a resource, such as its interrupt and direct memory address, and various formulas for mixing and matching resources with different devices.

DESPITE ADVANTAGES, IT MAY NOT BE READY FOR YOU

SCSI: Still Crazy After All These Years

SCSI was originally designed to make life easier—like the Tax Reform Act of 1986. The motivation for both was simple: economics. In theory, by building computer systems and peripherals to meet the SCSI standard, manufacturers could guarantee themselves plug-and-play interoperability. Computer makers would have a wide variety of compatible peripherals, and peripheral makers could sell identical SCSI hardware to PC, Macintosh, DEC, and Mips owners. Right. And to calculate your taxes, you merely have to multiply your income by 28 percent.

A SCSI system can support a large number of peripherals, reducing the impact on your PC in terms of slots and CPU usage. Despite these virtues, however, SCSI is still a maturing standard and, in most cases, represents more potential than productivity.

SCSI differs considerably from other common interface standards, such as IDE or serial ports. In a SCSI system, intelligent peripherals exchange commands and data over a private communications channel: the SCSI bus. Unlike your PC's expansion bus, which is formed by printed circuit traces and fixed card connectors (slots), the SCSI bus is simply an interconnecting cable.

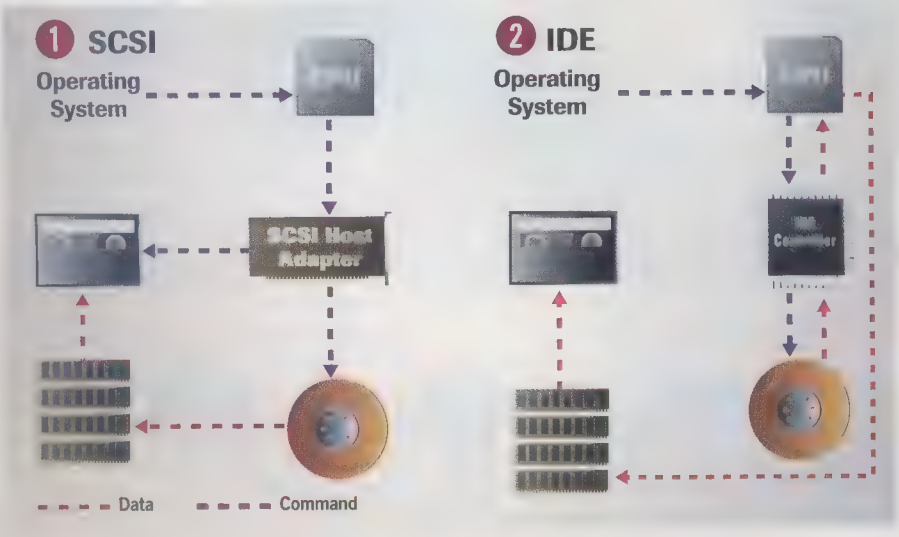
A key element of the standard is that SCSI devices aren't passive. There's no single central intelligence, for example, that manages how the devices interact or decides which device talks and which listens. Instead, SCSI peripherals communicate as peers, sending commands and data in packets addressed to each other.

But adding intelligence to a peripheral makes it more costly to manufacture. SCSI devices typically are priced higher than their dumber counterparts. Balancing this cost, however, is design freedom for the manufacturer. Regardless of its function or how it operates internally, a device that sends and receives SCSI commands can always connect to a SCSI bus.

System Advantages Proponents of SCSI are quick to point out the benefits of the standard. A single SCSI bus can connect up to eight SCSI devices. The SCSI adapter card itself counts as one device, but that still leaves you free to attach two hard drives, a CD-ROM drive, a tape drive, a Bernoulli drive, a magneto-optical drive, and even a

HOW IT WORKS SCSI PLACES A LOWER LOAD ON THE CPU

SCSI Setup: A SCSI host adapter has several advantages over an IDE controller. One of the greatest advantages is that two SCSI peripherals on the same host adapter can talk to each other with very little CPU involvement, freeing the CPU to run your applications.



1. SCSI The operating system sends a command through the CPU to the SCSI host adapter. (In our example, that command says to transfer a block of data from the hard disk to the tape drive.) The host adapter pulls the data off the disk, stores it in the system's RAM, and signals the tape drive to dump it onto the tape. The CPU is minimally involved.

2. IDE The CPU must negotiate between the tape drive (connected on a floppy cable) and the disk drive (through the IDE controller) at every step—sending commands and transferring data. Many steps are repeated.

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WORKAROUNDS PERFORMANCE: **SCSI VS. IDE**

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full-page scanner. SCSI supports all of these peripherals with a single slot in your PC.

The IDE standard is popular, practical, and great for PC systems. But IDE's current DOS interface requirements limit the size of drives to a maximum of 528MB. SCSI adapter cards, however, access drives as large as 8GB under DOS (and larger under many other operating systems). In applications that require enormous amounts of disk space—a central network server, for example—SCSI's the obvious choice.

SCSI is also the data-transfer–rate champ. Theoretically, the upper limit on an IDE data transfer is about 4 megabytes per second (MBps). On average, your PC delivers about half that. The basic SCSI bus, on the other hand, boasts a data-transfer rate of 5 MBps. A recent enhancement to the SCSI standard, called Fast SCSI, bumps that rate up to 10 MBps. Another variation, called Wide SCSI, increases the width of the SCSI bus from 8 bits to 16 bits and provides an extension to 32 bits. A Fast and Wide SCSI bus could reach transfer speeds of 40 MBps, in theory.

Recent modifications to the IDE standard will allow it to match SCSI's drive size, increase the number of drives it supports from two to four, and approximate the speed of Fast SCSI at 11 MBps. But SCSI still offers a major advantage: Because it's a self-contained bus, SCSI improves your PC's performance. Given the proper set of commands, two SCSI peripherals can exchange data directly with each other. Once the exchange begins, the host adapter card and your CPU are no longer required to participate. A SCSI hard drive, for example, could send data to a tape drive on the SCSI bus with minimal demands on your PC's CPU.

Finally, the SCSI bus provides some real advantages for modern multitasking systems. Commands from the CPU to a SCSI device can be queued, freeing the processor to return immediately to other tasks. The SCSI system can then prioritize—and possibly reorder—these commands and data transfers to maximize efficiency.

No One's Perfect One of SCSI's big advantages, flexibility, has also been its most serious flaw. The original SCSI standard included a wide variety of commands. With few exceptions, however, individual manufacturers choose which of these commands to implement.

Consequently, one SCSI device could not know in advance which commands another SCSI device would support, making it impossible to guarantee that any two SCSI devices could communicate. Users of early SCSI devices often had to get the host adapter and peripheral from the same manufacturer if they wanted them to talk.

Fortunately, the updated SCSI-2 standard partially solves the noncommunication problem. Among the changes imposed by SCSI-2 is an expansion of the mandatory command set: Any device claiming to meet the SCSI-2 standard must now respond to a minimum set of commands. This increases the chance—but does not guarantee—that two SCSI-2 peripherals from different manufacturers will work together. Nonetheless, insist on a SCSI-2 interface.

SCSI devices are connected in series, to use the electrical term. Any external devices you buy, therefore, should sport two SCSI connectors—one to connect to the previous device and one for the next. To operate reliably, a SCSI subsystem must be terminated at both ends—and only at the ends. Common resistors are used for terminators. Internally, these usually take the form of three single inline package components. Externally, plug-in terminators may be provided to accomplish the same purpose. If your system uses only internal or only external devices, then the host adapter must be one end of the chain and must contain a terminator. If you have both internal and external devices, the host adapter must be in the middle of the bus and must not be terminated.

Uniqueness Each peripheral on a SCSI bus must be assigned a unique ID number ranging from 0 to 7. During bus communications, the host adapter and peripherals use this number to identify commands meant for each device. The higher the number, the higher the priority given to the device during a bus contention: When two devices "talk" at once, the device with the higher number can talk louder. The host adapter is usually assigned ID 7—it shouts. Hard drives that must be accessed by ROM during a system boot or otherwise recognized before the operating system is installed might be restricted to an ID of 0 (the boot drive) or 1.

Finally, like any foreign hardware system, a SCSI adapter requires the installation of one or more device drivers. The device drivers translate DOS requests into commands that the SCSI devices can understand. The more devices you add to your SCSI bus, the more device drivers (and system memory) you'll need. Newer operating systems, such as OS/2 and Windows NT, contain built-in support for many popular SCSI host adapters and devices. Check that a driver for your device is available under your operating system before you buy it.

Your requirements for a unique peripheral or huge hard disk might drive you into the arms of SCSI. If so, the safest course may be to buy the host card and peripherals at the same time from the same vendor. Be sure to specify SCSI-2 compatibility and demand a written guarantee that all the components will work together.

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UnInstaller is a trademark of MicroHelp, Inc. Windows is a trademark of Microsoft Corp.

Circle 151 on reader service card.

This Month's Free Software and Shareware

All the public-domain and shareware programs and utilities featured in *PC Computing* each month are available from our online service, PC Contact, or on disk from Public Brand Software for a fee. Shareware requires additional payment to authors for continued use. This month's files are available in PC Contact's data library 3 (Utilities/Misc.). For information on ordering them from Public Brand Software, see below. Here's a sampling of the programs you'll find this month.

WINDOWS: HELP TO TEXT 188

SmartDoc Need a great way to navigate through Windows' Help files? Turn them into text files that you can edit with your favorite word processor or pull into a full text-indexed database. All it takes is SmartDoc, a shareware utility. Download SMTDOC.ZIP.

DOS: REGULAR RUNS 194

Torok Scheduler When you need to run specific commands on certain days, there's no better tool for the task than the Torok Scheduler. Tell it the day of the week, day of the month, or span of time between runs and it'll handle the job. Download TOROK.ZIP.

NETWORKING: GOPHER IT 210

HGopher 2.3 Want info from the Internet? Gopher beats anonymous FTP, and no Gopher beats HGopher 2.3. It's multithreaded—you can run up to three searches at once—and it has an intuitive Windows interface. You supply TCP/IP drivers, we supply the Gopher. Download GOPHER.ZIP.

TOP PICKS ON DISK

You can easily get all the public-domain utilities or shareware covered in this month's issue by calling Public Brand Software at (800) 426-3475 or (317) 856-7571. Ask for this month's Editors' Picks from *PC Computing*. They're available for $5 or less per disk (most disks have several utilities and programs on them), plus $5 for shipping and handling.

HOW TO JOIN

Current CompuServe or ZiffNet members type GO ZNT:PCCONTAC at any CIS ! prompt. Cost varies depending on which CompuServe plan you belong to and the speed at which you connect. For complete membership and hourly rate information, type GO RATES while online.

ZiffNet users pay a monthly membership fee of $2.95. This support fee provides a variety of free and chargeable services. For the latest information about these services, type GO ZNT:ZIFFHELP and download the files GOWORD.TXT and FREE.TXT from data library 1 (General Information).

Follow these steps to join ZiffNet and participate in the PC Contact forum:

1. Set these modem and software parameters: 7 data bits, even parity, 1 stop bit, full duplex.
2. Call CompuServe's customer assistance line at (800) 848-8990 (United States) or (800) 635-6225 (Canada). From other countries, dial CompuServe direct at (614) 457-8650. You can also call CompuServe with your modem. Set your modem as instructed above and dial (800) 346-3247. Press Enter when your modem connects. Type PHONES at the HOST NAME prompt, press Enter, and follow the onscreen prompts to find a local access number.
3. Dial the access number with a modem. When your modem connects to the network, press Ctrl-C to get the system's attention.
4. At the HOST NAME prompt, type CIS and press Enter.
5. At the USER ID prompt, type 177000,5300 and press Enter.
6. At the PASSWORD prompt, type PC/CONTACT and press Enter.
7. At the ENTER AGREEMENT NUMBER prompt, type PCC94 and press Enter.

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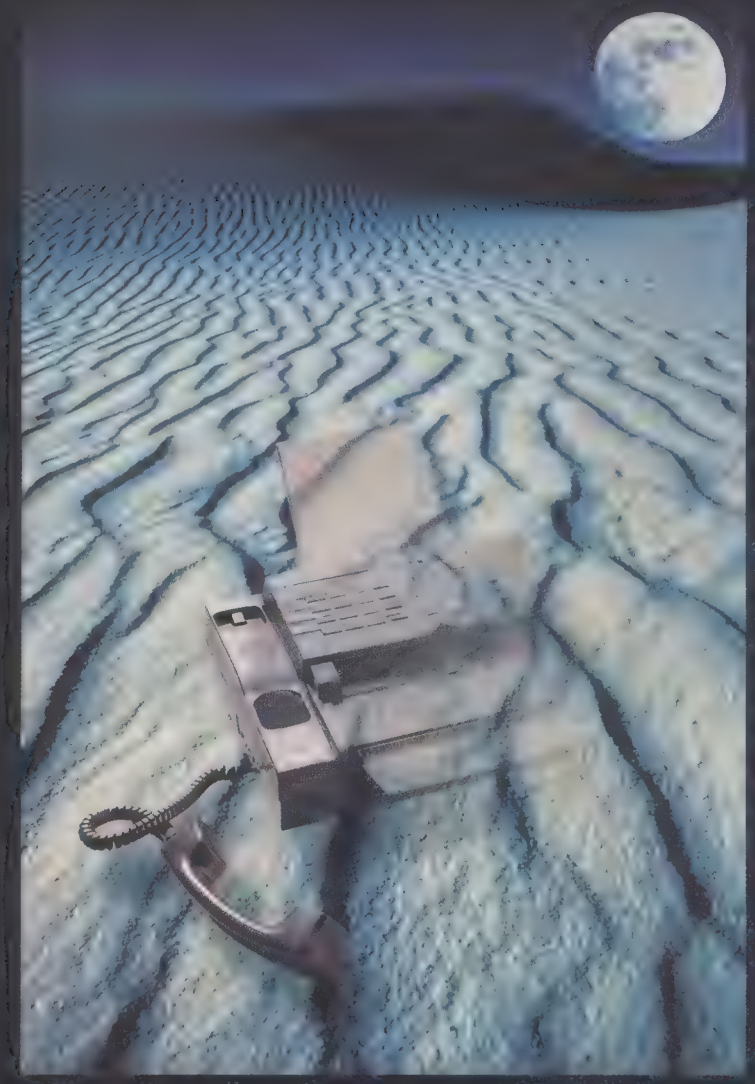

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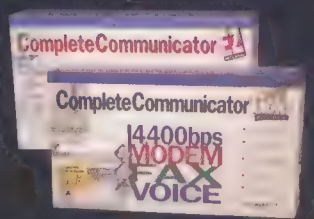

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See the difference.

The editors do.

Is there really a difference in monitors? You bet there is! There's also a difference in the companies that produce them! So, what's the difference? Well, it's in the performance, price, service and support. In fact, the editors of several major magazines, including PC World and PC Computing, found out that all monitors are not created equal. That's why they named the ViewSonic 17 the "BEST" monitor in their roundup. Here's what they said:

"Some folks crave performance. Some look for price. And then there are those who want it all. If you belong to the third crowd, the ViewSonic 17 is the monitor for you. The ViewSonic 17 stands out as the best all-around value in the review."
— PC World: April 1994

"Best color quality, best sharpness and best versatility – what more could we ask of the ViewSonic 17? Frankly, we were surprised that one monitor could do it all."
— PC Computing: January 1994

What sets this, and all ViewSonic color monitors, apart is the dedication by the company to supply high-performance, award-winning products at a reasonable price. And, our reputation bears out the excellent service and support we provide to our distributors, resellers and end-users. When they call with questions, they get action.

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*17" CRTs yield 15.5" to 15.7" diagonal viewable screens.
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Circle 170 on reader service card.

GREAT COLOR, LOW PRICE

Printers: Color Is Definitely on the Wax

Six-month-old infants will grab the most colorful thing within their reach. We all know at least one corporate vice president who acts the same way. A report or proposal dressed with color gets read first and lingered over longer than drab monochrome memos. Ink jet printers are fine for spot color and pie charts. But for inexpensive continuous-tone images and 24-bit graphics, only thermal wax-transfer printers will do. While their quality keeps getting better, their costs continue to slump: A printer priced at $10,000 three years ago costs about $5,500 today.

Better models raise the industry-standard 300-dpi resolution to 300 by 600 dpi, which has a staggering effect on the quality of photographs and other halftone images. Also, the standard three-color (cyan, magenta, and yellow) transfer ribbon is quickly giving way to a four-color ribbon that adds black (CMYK ribbon).

Since color printers are designed for graphics, PostScript Level 2 emulation is a must—and you should make sure that a driver is included. Also, look for PCL 5 emulation; it's fast becoming the standard. You'll want at least 35 Adobe Type 1 fonts. Obviously, the more fonts you get, the better and faster you'll be.

Don't expect pages to fly from a thermal wax-transfer printer. Even with a fast RISC chip and 4MB of memory, you can expect a print speed of about 1 page per minute (ppm). Better models come with 8MB to 16MB of RAM, which will stoke performance somewhat. Anything less than 4MB and you'll finger-drum dents into your desk waiting for documents to emerge.

One way to goose performance if you're on a network is to send your print jobs through an Ethernet connection, instead of a parallel port. Few thermal wax-transfer printers come with these built in, but you should ask which interface options are available before you proffer your credit card.

While you're at it, ask about the cost of consumables. Ultimately, you'll pay more for wax ribbons and coated paper than for the printer itself. Incidentally, some vendors still claim that their printers will work with plain copier paper. Beware: We have yet to see one that lives up to this claim.

MARTY JEROME

PC Computing

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MARTY JEROME

COLOR PRINTERS

FOR **HIGH-QUALITY COLOR,** LOOK FOR THERMAL WAX

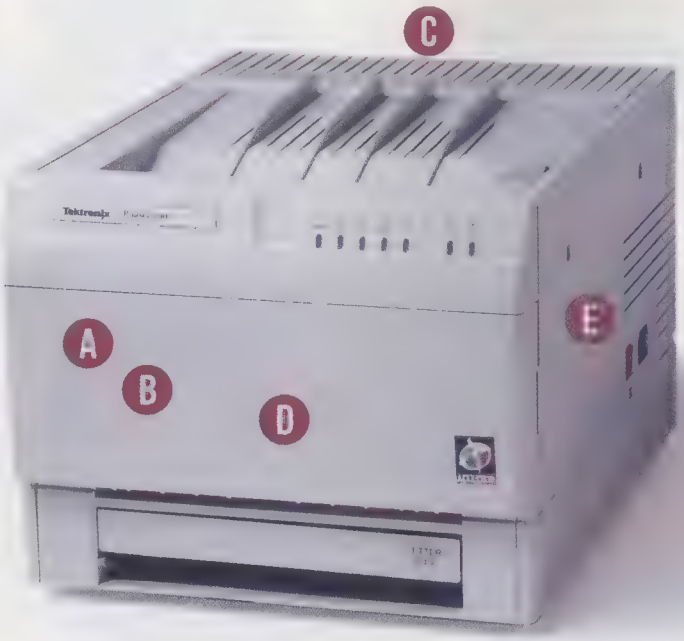
A Processor: Look for a 16MHz RISC CPU at least.

B RAM: 4MB, upgradable to 8MB.

C Interface: A parallel port is usually sufficient.

D Fonts: 35 Adobe PostScript Type 1 at the very minimum.

E Ribbon: A four-color ribbon will give you blacker blacks.



Emulations: PostScript Level 1 and 2 and PCL 5.

Print speed: 2 ppm.

Resolution: 300 by 600 dpi.

Features and options: Internal network interfaces, support for four-color ribbons (three colors plus black), EPA Energy Star compliance, ability to print on B-oversize paper.

RED FLAGS: Be sure vendor provides a PostScript Level 2 driver; despite some claims, business-quality printing on plain copier paper isn't a reality yet, although many printers can manage low-weight, uncoated paper.

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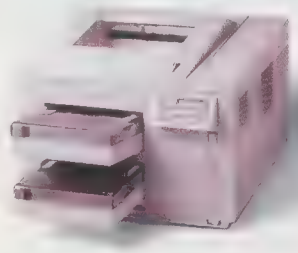
SPEC WATCH: Don't Settle for Less than These Specs

NETWORK LASER PRINTERS



Emulations: PCL 5, PostScript Level 2 with automatic emulation switching.

Print engine speed: At least 17 ppm.

Resolution: 600 dpi.

Processor: 16MHz RISC.

Resident fonts: 90 total—10 TrueType (matching Windows 3.1), 45 PCL 5, 35 PostScript.

RAM: 8MB.

Interfaces: Parallel and 10Base-T or 10Base-2 Ethernet, Token Ring, or LocalTalk.

Network support: Concurrent for Novell NetWare, Windows NT, and Windows for Workgroups.

Paper capacity: 1,000 sheets.

Warranty: One year with onsite service.

Features and options: SNMP support, particularly the ability to download printer drivers to all network printer users from a central node; EPA Energy Star compliance; legal-sized paper tray; LCD front-panel display.

WINDOWS DISPLAYS

Size: 17 inches, 20 to 21 inches for graphics applications.

Resolutions: 1,024 by 768; 1,280 by 1,024 for 21-inch monitors; some now support 1,600 by 1,280; noninterlaced.

Dot pitch: 0.28mm or smaller for 17-inch monitors, 0.31mm or smaller for 21 inch.

Vertical refresh rate: 72Hz or higher at all resolutions.

Tube type: Flat-square or Trinitron.

Controls: Front-panel or onscreen digital controls.

Features and options: Support for MPR II low-emissions standards, compliant with EPA Energy Star requirements, ability to save settings for different resolutions and refresh rates. For 21-inch monitors, use 1,600-by-1,200-pixel resolution.

Other requirements: Adjustable tilt-and-swivel base, video cable, antiglare coating or add-on filter, color controls, microprocessor-based controls.

RED FLAGS: Monitors with dot pitch above 0.31mm may seem fuzzy. Make sure the monitor supports the resolutions and particularly the refresh rates of your video card.

DESKTOP LASER PRINTERS

Emulations: PCL 5, PostScript option with automatic emulation switching and all ports active.

Print engine speed: 8 ppm.

Resolution: 600 dpi.

Resident fonts: 45 total; 10 TrueType fonts (matching Windows 3.1).

RAM: At least 2MB.

Interface: Bidirectional parallel.

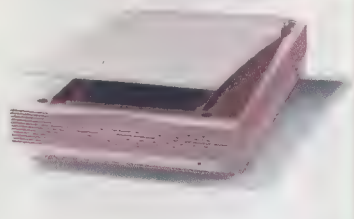
Paper capacity: 200 sheets.

Footprint: 260 square inches or less.

Features and options: HP-compatible font cartridges, RISC processor for 600-dpi models, toner included, EPA Energy Star compliance.

Other requirements: Toner cartridge, parallel cable, envelope tray.

FLATBED COLOR SCANNERS



Resolution: 400 to 600 dpi.

Image scanning capabilities: 24-bit color (16.7 million colors), grayscale (256 shades of gray), black and white.

Compatibility: Twain.

Interface: SCSI-2.

Image controls: External controls for adjusting brightness, contrast, and color of scan; adjustable resolution.

Bundled software: 24-bit image editing software, OCR software.

Features and options: Automatic document sheet feeder, transparency feeder, free replacement scanner bulb, color calibration feature.

Other requirements: Cables and SCSI adapter card included in price.

RED FLAGS: Watch for vendors that cite interpolated resolution rather than optical resolution. Interpolation uses software to fill in spaces between pixels. The quality of interpolation algorithms varies greatly.

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LBP 430 860 Laser	$555* /$1 289*

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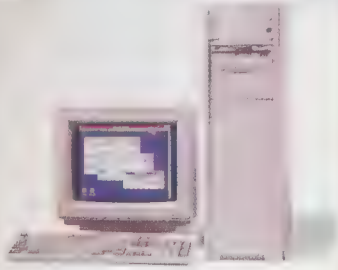
NETWORK SERVERS



CPU: Intel 486DX2/66, 486DX4, or Pentium.

RAM: 16MB, expandable to 128MB.

CPU RAM cache: 256K.

Display: 14-inch Super VGA color or monochrome.

Video card: Super VGA with 512K of RAM.

Hard drive: 1GB SCSI-2.

Bus: Eight EISA slots with two VL-Bus or PCI.

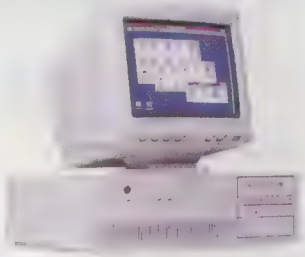
Drive bays: Two full-height 5¼-inch, two half-height 5¼-inch with front-panel access, two 3½-inch.

Features and options: RAID-5, DAT backup, uninterruptible power supply, dual-speed CD-ROM drive, built-in SCSI-2 controller, Ethernet controller, protected power switch to prevent accidentally turning the power off.

Other requirements: FCC Class A or better, UL listed.

RED FLAGS: Systems with ISA bus or slotted RAM are less upgradable. Database and other application servers need more CPU power than a file server.

MIDRANGE DESKTOP SYSTEMS



CPU: Intel 486DX2/66, 486DX4, or Pentium.

Secondary cache: 256K four-way set-associative.

Memory: 8MB, expandable to 32MB, 36-pin SIMMs.

Floppy drive: 3½-inch.

Hard drive: 400MB or larger IDE or SCSI-2.

Video: VL-Bus or PCI Windows accelerator, 15-inch monitor or larger with 72Hz refresh at 1,024 by 768 pixels.

Slots: Eight ISA slots for full-sized case (including two VL-Bus or PCI), three ISA slots for small-footprint case with integrated VL-Bus or PCI video and drive.

Drives and bays: One 3½-inch 1.44MB and one 5¼-inch 1.2MB floppy drive, five half-height 5¼-inch bays.

Features and options: Dual-speed or faster CD-ROM drive, sound card or built-in sound capability, two parallel ports, two COM ports, and keyboard and mouse ports.

RED FLAGS: Watch for Pentium-upgradable systems that don't include a ZIF socket, secondary CPU cache, or lots of slots for extra RAM.

SUBNOTEBOOK PCS

CPU: Intel 33MHz 486SX.

Display type: 7½-inch backlit passive, dual-scan passive, or active-matrix LCD.

Weight: 4 pounds or less.

Size: Smaller than 8½ by 11 by 2 inches.

Keyboard: 90 percent of full-sized keyboard.

RAM: 4MB, expandable to 16MB.

Hard drive: 80MB or larger.

Features and options: Removable hard drive, high-speed internal fax modem, integrated pointing device, infrared keyboard connection.

Other requirements: External floppy, at least one PCMCIA Type II slot, small recharger (5½ by 3 by 1½ inches or smaller).

RED FLAGS: Subnotebook displays and keyboards entail compromise—try before you buy, or make sure there's a money-back guarantee with no restocking charge. In addition, many subnotebook batteries run down quickly, particularly when you're using color. Make sure the battery is easy to replace. User-installable RAM is also a plus.

NOTEBOOK PCS

CPU: 33MHz 486.

Display type: 9½-inch or larger backlit dual-scan passive- or active-matrix color LCD with accelerated local bus. Look for adjustable contrast and brightness controls.

Weight: Less than 7 pounds without AC adapter; total traveling weight less than 9 pounds.

Size: Smaller than 10 by 12 by 2 inches.

RAM: 8MB, expandable to 20MB.

Hard drive: 120MB.

Ports/slots: Parallel, 9-pin serial, PS/2 ports; one PCMCIA Type III slot or two Type II slots.

Features and options: Ability to swap out floppy drive for second battery, removable hard drive, user-installable RAM, integrated pointing device. Pen pointing device and touch screen can be useful in some instances. Look for notebooks that support new Duracell standard-sized rechargeable batteries.

Other requirements: Standby mode, pop-up battery gauge, 6-by-3-by-3-inch (or smaller) battery recharger.

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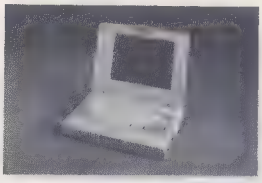

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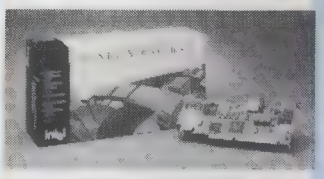

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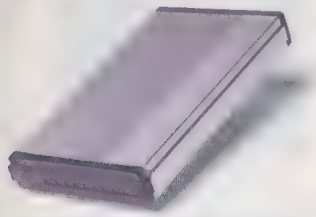


Transmission rate: 14,400 bps without compression, 57,600 bps with compression.

Supported standards: V.32bis (data speed), V.42 (error correction), V.42bis (data compression), CCITT Group 3 Class 1, Class 2, and CAS (fax).

Compatibility: Hayes command set.

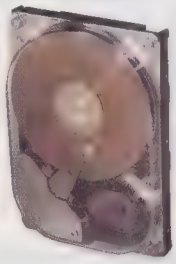
Port selection: COM1 through COM4.

Bundled software: DOS and Windows communications and fax software, OCR software.

Features and options: Integrated voice, data, and fax; onboard digital-signal processor and coprocessor; 16550 universal asynchronous receiver/transmitter (UART); LCD display on external modems; upgradability to V.Fast (V.34) protocol.

RED FLAGS: Fax modems without fallback transmission rates may not connect with other machines.

HARD DRIVES



Performance: 13ms or faster vendor-rated average access time; if vendor reports performance as average seek time, 10ms or faster.

Capacity: 400MB or greater.

Size: Half height or full height, depending on your system's drive bays.

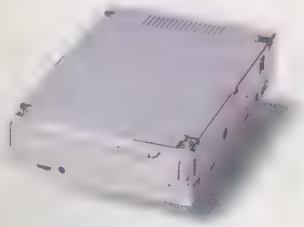
Interface: IDE for desktop systems with up to 1GB of capacity. For larger capacities, get a SCSI-2 drive interface.

Features and options: Self-parking heads, diagnostic and partitioning software, spindle synchronization for use in redundant arrays of inexpensive disks (RAIDs), support for single-ended differential SCSI (if it's a SCSI drive).

Cache or buffer: 64K to 256K (a 512K segmented cache is top-of-the-line).

RED FLAGS: Mounting brackets and cables should come with the disk; look for a 30-day full money-back guarantee, a three- or five-year warranty, and a mean time between failure rating of at least 200,000 hours.

CD-ROM DRIVES



Access time: 200ms.

Transfer rate: Dual-speed drive—150 Kbps to 300 Kbps.

Ondrive cache: 64K.

Interface: SCSI-2.

Compatibility: High Sierra and ISO-9660 (data), CD-Audio, and Kodak Photo CD (still photography) with multisession support (MPC 2).

Audio: Output jack and volume control.

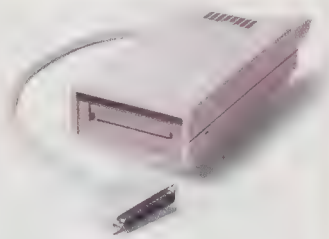
Packaging: Internal.

Features and options: Bundled CD-ROMs, single-handed operation, newer CD-ROM drives support 450 and 600 Kbps transfer rates, support for new CD-ROM XA (extended architecture) is a nice option but support for this standard appears to be waning, double doors are useful in dusty environments, caddy-less designs are more convenient.

Other requirements: If you buy a CD-ROM drive that requires a disk caddy, make sure one comes with it.

RED FLAGS: Proprietary interfaces and drives that don't support MPC 2 will probably work with less software and hardware.

SINGLE-USER TAPE DRIVES



Storage capacity: 250MB when compressed.

Packaging: Internal 3½-inch drive preferred; external for PC-to-PC portability.

Interface: Floppy drive, IDE, or SCSI.

Cartridge type: DC6250, DC2120, or equivalent, preformatted; for higher capacities, look at 4mm DAT drives.

Bundled software: Windows and DOS backup software that supports either QIC-80 or QIC-525 tape format.

Other requirements: Floppy interface splitter or other interface cable, mounting hardware for internal drives.

RED FLAGS: Ensure full QIC-80 compatibility for mini-cartridge drives; avoid proprietary controller cards—they may take up an extra slot in your system; try for a price below $1 per megabyte.

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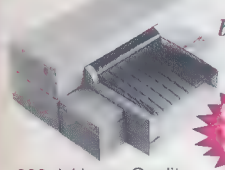

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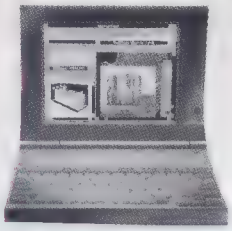

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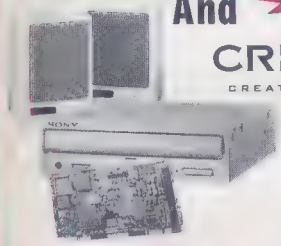

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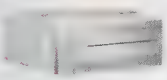

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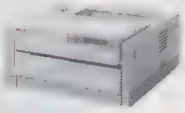

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AP 3260 .....$179 DFX-5000+ $1319
LQ-570+.....$239 DFX-8000 .....$2249
FX-870 .....$268 Stylus 300 .....$229
FX-1170 .....$349 Stylus 800 .....$244*
LQ-1070+.....$364 Stylus 1000 ....$439
*After $25 Mail in Rebate. Ends 6/30/94.

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LASER PRINTERS
KX-P4410 ..... $529 KX-P5400 ....$799
KX-P4400 .....$499 KX-P4440 ..... $999
KX-P4430 ..... $659

DOT MATRIX PRINTERS
KX-P1150 .....$129 KX-P1624 .....$369
KX-P2023 .....$199 KX-P3123 .....$249
KX-P2123 .....$239 KX-P3124 .....$319
KX-P2124 .. $309 KX-P3624 .....$399

CANON
BUBBLE JET PRINTERS*
BJ-10SX / 200e / 230.....$219/$259/$359
BJC-600 / 800 / 820.....$549/$1469/$1599
LBP-430 / 860.....$559/$1339
*Prices include $30 Rebate.

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NEC
Silentwriter 610 / 1097.....$479 / $1379

TEXAS INSTRUMENTS
microMarc™/ Color .....$249** / $389
microWriter $509
microWriter PS23/PS65 .....$679/$939
microLaser Pro 600 PS23/PS65.....$1299*/$1469*
Pro 600 imaging cartridge.....$159
*After $60 mail-in rebate. Ends. 6/30/94.
**After $30 mail-in rebate. Ends. 6/30/94.

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JX-9660PS.....$1249

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GRAPHICS ULTRA™ PRO 2MB ISA/VLB/EISA .....$329/$329/$399

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Dynamite Pro VLB 1MB/2MB.....$159/$199
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Fahrenheit 1280+ ISA 1MB $139
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Celsius VLB 1MB/2MB ....$199/$249

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ACCURA 144+fax144.....$155/$169
Optima 144+ fax144.....$369/$379
Optima 144+ fax Pocket Ed.....$299

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ActionNote 4000 120MB $1349
ActionNote 4000 170MB $1399
ActionNote 4SLC2-50 120MB W/Modem..... .....$1429
ActionNote 4SLC2-50 180MB.....$1429
ActionNote 4SLC2-50 180MB W/Modem.....$1529
ActionNote 500C 120MB W/Modem $1979
ActionNote 500C 180MB W/Modem .. $2069
ActionNote 700 120MB/210MB. ..... $1859/$1929
ActionNote 700C 210MB... ... .$2549
ActionNote 700Cx 210MB $3199

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T1950CT 200 MB/320MB .... $2899/$3149
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WinDX2/50 Mono 200MB..... .....$2429
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WinDX2/40 Color 200MB..... .....$2439
WinDX2/50 Dual Scan Color 200MB ...$2789
WinDX2/50 Act. Matrix Color 200MB ..$3379
WinDX4/75 Active Matrix Color 340MB/455MB ....$4449/$4949
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TravelMate DeskTop Intelligent Docking System $799

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- 11-Bay Mid-Tower case
- 101-Key enhanced keyboard & Mouse
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- 16-Bit Stereo Sound Card w/speakers
- MS-DOS & WFW 3.11
- 3 CD Discs: Borland Office 2.0*, Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia , and Kodak Photo CD
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- Prodigy, Compuserve, and America On-Line software preloaded

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- 3.5" 1.44MB Floppy Drive
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- PCI Local Bus Enhanced IDE controller
- 15" Digital Color Monitor with Flat Screen and .28mm dot pitch
- 11-Bay Mid-Tower case
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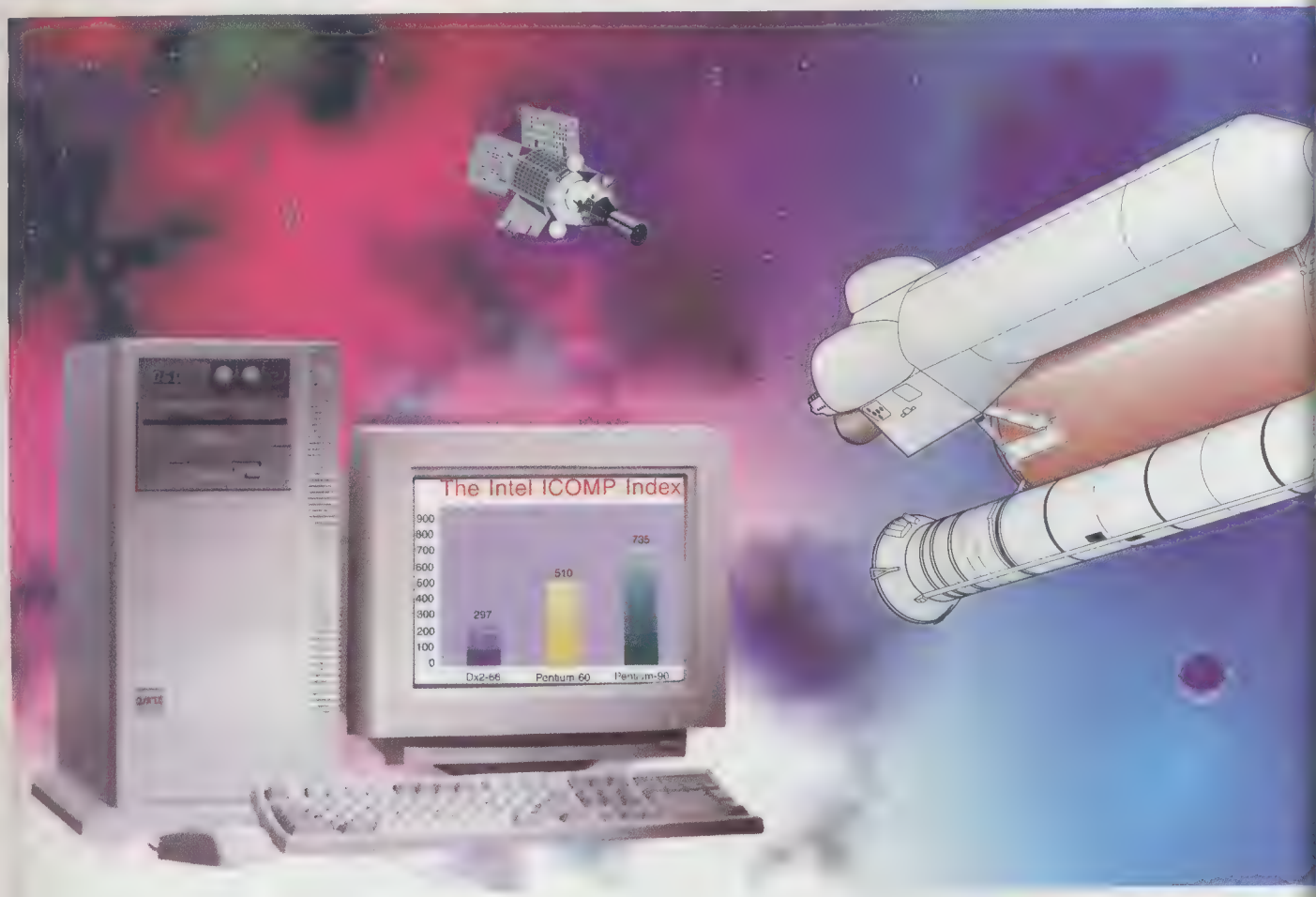

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Caviar

PARADISE FOUND HERE

intel inside pentium PROCESSOR

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- PCI Local Bus enhanced IDE cotroller
- 15" Digital Color Monitor with Flat Screen and .28mm dot pitch
- 11-Bay Mid-Tower case
- 101-Key enhanced keyboard & Mouse
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QP5/66W-1	**$2095**
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QP5/90W-2 $2795

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- 11-Bay Mid-Tower case
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- MS-DOS & WFW 3.11
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Max Refresh Rate	70 Hz	70 Hz	90 Hz	90 Hz	105 Hz
Dot Pitch	N/A	.28mm	.28mm	.28mm	.26mm
110-240 VAC (Auto-sensing)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
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DX2/50	Active Matrix	450MB
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$1999*

TravelMate 4000M

TravelMate 4000E Color

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486DX2/50	Active Matrix	$3349
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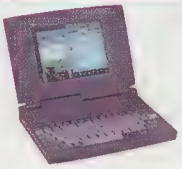

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4/50s 273W	8MB	270MB	$1589
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4/66d 543W	8MB	540MB	$2269
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Bravo LC

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4/33 Model 173W	170MB	$1519
4/33 Model 343W	340MB	$1979
4/66d Model 3	Optional	$1659
4/66d Model 173W	170MB	$1929
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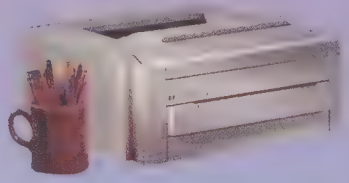

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UltraLite Versa E

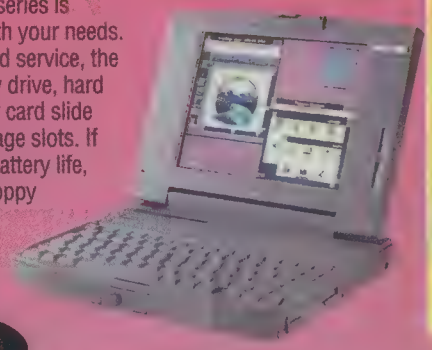
- ▲ 486 processor
- ▲ 4MB RAM, expandable to 20MB
- ▲ 2 Type II PCMCIA slots
- ▲ MS-DOS 6.2, Windows 3.1, built-in trackball

Processor	Screen	Hard drive	Price
DX2/40	Active color	120MB	$3819
DX2/40	Active color	250MB	$4229
DX2/50	Monochrome	209MB	$3259*
DX2/50	Active color	209MB	$4499
DX2/50	Active color	340MB	$4919
DX4/75	Active color	340MB	$5229

Lease for $120/mo.

UltraLite Versa E

The Versa E notebook series is upgradable to grow with your needs. For ease of upgrade and service, the UltraLite Versa's floppy drive, hard disk drive and memory card slide in and out of their storage slots. If you require extended battery life, slide out the Versa's floppy drive, pop in a second battery, and double your time on the road.



Versa E $3259*

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MultiSpin 3Xp Portable Drive	$389.99
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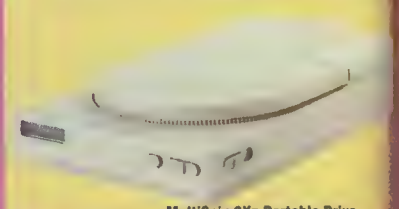
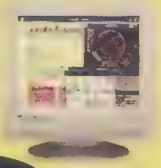


MultiSpin 3Xp Portable Drive

MultiSync Monitors

3V

- ▲ 15" SVGA
- ▲ 1024x768, .28mm NI
- ▲ 72MHz VESA refresh
- ▲ MPR II, EnergyStar



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Meeting your needs for aggressive pricing and outstanding quality, the PowerMate 486 series features local bus video and a graphics accelertor to deliver falcon-like speed. By combining 486 processing power with local bus video and True Color support, the PowerMate takes you to new heights in performance.

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- ▲ MS DOS, Windows 3.1, NEC mouse

Processor	Hard drive	Price
486SX/33	170MB	$1129*
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486DX2/66	210MB	$1749

*NEC SVGA monitor $319.99

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Processor	RAM	Hard Drive	Price
486SX/33	4MB	200MB	$1099*
486DX2/50	4MB	340MB	$1599
486DX2/66	4MB	340MB	$1829
486DX2/66	4MB	525MB	$1969
486DX4/100	8MB	340MB	$2299
486DX4/100	8MB	525MB	$2469

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- ▲ 486SL/25 processor
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- ▲ 209MB hard drive
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- ▲ MS-DOS 6.0, Windows 3.1, trackball

Screen	Price
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Dual scan Color	$2319

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- ▲ 2 TYPE II or 1 Type III PCMCIA slots
- ▲ Untethered intelligent pen
- ▲ MS-DOS 6.0, Windows 3.1, InkWare NoteTaker
- ▲ PenPower for Excel

Processor	RAM	Hard Drive	Price
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486SL/25	4MB	250MB	$1319
486SL/33	4MB	250MB	$1399

Lease for $50/mo.

Contura Aero

- ▲ Type II PCMCIA slot
- ▲ Integrated trackball
- ▲ Weighs only 3.5 lbs.(mono), 4.31 lbs. (color)
- ▲ MS-DOS, Windows 3.1

Processor	Display	Hard Drive	Price
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486SX25	Mono	170MB	$1599
486SX33	Passive Color	170MB	$2079
486SX33	Passive Color	250MB	$2359

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- ▲ 512KB Video RAM exp. to 1MB
- ▲ 2 Serial, parallel, mouse, and keyboard ports
- ▲ IBM DOS 6.1/MS Windows 3.1, mouse

Processor	Hard Drive	Price*
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SX 25	120MB	$929
DX/33	212MB	$1399
DX2/66	212MB	$1789

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- ▲ 1MB Video RAM exp. to 2MB
- ▲ 5 expansion slots, 5 drive bays
- ▲ IBM DOS 6.1, MS Windows 3.1, mouse

Processor	Hard Drive	Price*
486SX/33	170MB	$1219
486DX/33	212MB	$1559
486DX/33	340MB	$1719
486DX2/66	340MB	$2159

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- ▲ 16MB RAM exp. to 128MB
- ▲ 256KB cache standard
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- ▲ 5 drive bays

Processor	Hard Drive	Price*
Pentium 60MHz	424MB	$4029
Pentium 60MHz	525MB	$4099

*monitor priced separately

IBM Monitors

Description	Price
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14", digital controls, .28mm	$419.99
15", digital controls, .28mm	$579.99

ThinkPad® 350 notebooks

- ▲ 486SL25 processor
- ▲ 4MB RAM exp. to 20MB
- ▲ Local Bus Graphics
- ▲ 9.2" VGA color or 9.5" VGA mono screen
- ▲ PCMCIA Type II slot
- ▲ TrackPoint II integrated pointing device
- ▲ IBM DOS, Prodigy

Screen	Hard Drive	Price
Monochrome	125MB	$1639
Monochrome	250MB	$2029
Passive Color	125MB	$1939
Passive Color	250MB	$2319

ThinkPad® 500 subnotebooks

- ▲ IBM 486SLC2/50 processor
- ▲ 4MB RAM exp. to 12MB
- ▲ 170MB hard drive
- ▲ 7.4" VGA monochrome display
- ▲ Type II PCMCIA slot
- ▲ TrackPoint II integrated pointing device
- ▲ 3.5" external floppy drive
- ▲ Weighs only 3.8 lbs.
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- ▲ MS-DOS, UltraFont, Indeo video compression software, Windows 3.1 (T4700) Windows for Workgroups 3.11 (T4800)

Model	Processor	Screen	Hard Drive	Price
T4700	486DX2/50	Dual scan color	200MB	$3129*
T4700	486DX2/50	Dual scan color	320MB	$3379
T4700	486DX2/50	Active color	200MB	$4549
T4700	486DX2/50	Active color	320MB	$4949
T4800	486DX4/75	Active color	500MB	$5599

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T4700

$3129*

T3400

$1939*

Portege T3400

- ▲ Ultra-portability at only 4.1lbs
- ▲ 486SX/33 processor
- ▲ 120MB hard drive
- ▲ 4MB RAM, expandable to 20MB
- ▲ PCMCIA Type II slot
- ▲ External 3.5" disk drive
- ▲ Integrated AccuPoint pointing device

Screen	Price
Monochrome	$1939*
Active Color	$3419

Lease for $71/mo.

T1910/1950

- ▲ 4MB RAM, expandable to 20MB
- ▲ 9.5" display
- ▲ Type III PCMCIA slot
- ▲ 82-key keyboard
- ▲ MS-DOS, Windows 3.1
- ▲ Ballpoint mouse with Quickport
- ▲ Enhanced power management

Model	Processor	Screen	Hard Drive	Price
T1910	486SX/33	Monochrome	200MB	$1499*
T1910	486SX/33	Dual scan color	200MB	$2039
T1950	486DX2/40	Monochrome	200MB	$1799
T1950	486DX2/40	Dual scan color	200MB	$2289
T1950	486DX2/40	Active color	200MB	$2929
T1950	486DX2/40	Active color	320MB	$3199

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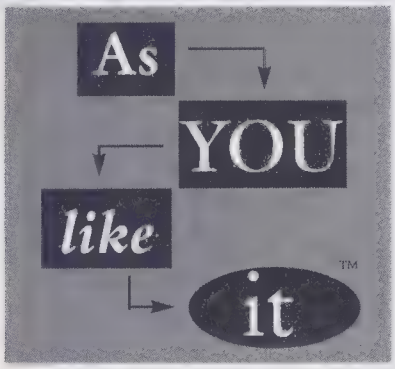

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- Our prices are among the lowest in the industry because we supply systems to some of the largest manufacturers in the world and that helps us keep production high and prices low.
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- VLB Graphics with 1MB
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- Dual Cooling Fans
- MS-DOS 6.2 & Windows 3.1
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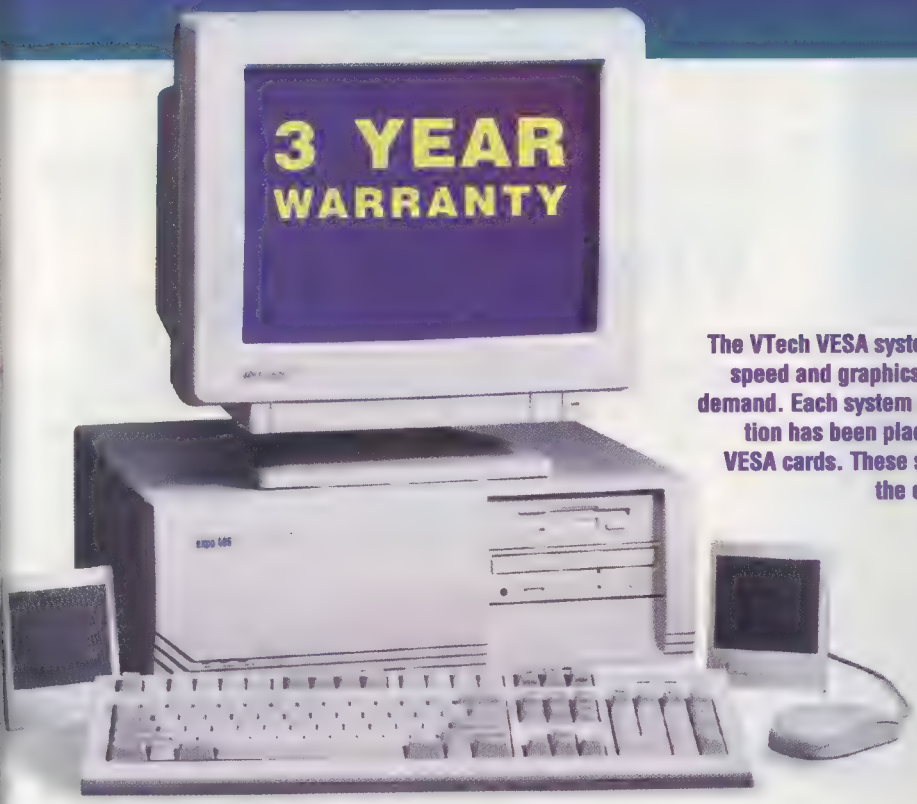

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- 30 day money back guarantee

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- Dual Cooling Fans
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- VLB Graphics with 1MB
- 3.5" Diskette Drive.
- 15" VTech HiRez Monitor
- Dual Cooling Fans
- MS-DOS 6.2 & Windows 3.1
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- 424MB 13ms IDE Hard Drive
- 256KB Copy Back Cache
- SCSI II w/ built-in BIOS support
- 16550 Serial Port Controllers
- Multiprocessor Upgrade Slot
- S3 VLB Accelerator with 1MB
- 3.5" Diskette Drive
- 15" VTech HiRez Monitor
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- 256KB Copy Back Cache
- SCSI II w/ built-in BIOS support
- 16550 Serial Port Controllers
- S3 VLB Accelerator with 1MB
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- Windows NT
- MS-DOS 6.2 & Windows 3.1
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- Full Size Metal Desktop Case
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- Enhanced 101 -Keyboard & Mouse
- 3 Year Warranty*

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- 424MB 13ms IDE Hard Drive
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- Full Size Metal Desktop Case
- MS-DOS 6.2 & Windows 3.1
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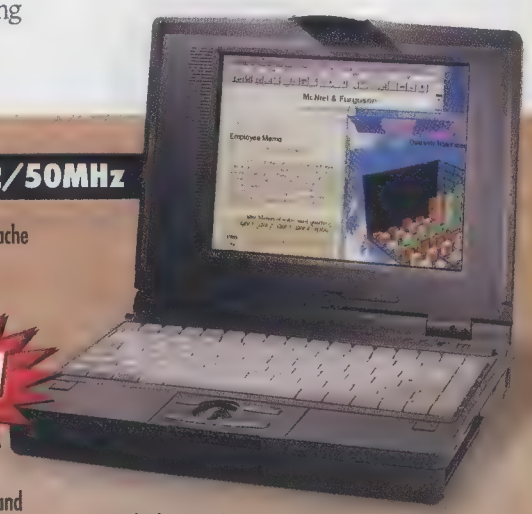

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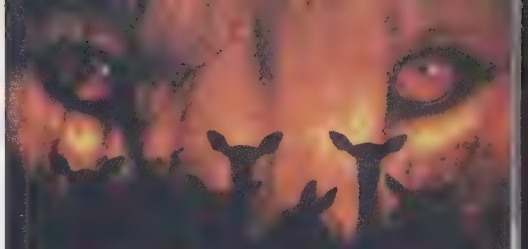

AcerNote 760cx i486DX2/50MHz The Presentation Performer

- i486DX2/50MHz Processor with Built-In 8KB Cache
- 4MB System RAM
- PCMCIA Type III Slot (Equivalent to Two Stacked Type II Slots)
- 9.5" Active-Matrix LCD Displays 256 Colors
- 350MB 2.5" Hard Disk Drive
- Palmrest with Integrated Trackball
- Local Bus Accelerated Graphics
- MS-DOS 6.2, Microsoft Windows 3.1
- International Travelers Warranty
- 24-hour "Hot Swap" Warranty

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AcerNote 735c i486SX/33MHz The Value Winner For Presentations

- Intel SL-Enhanced 486SX/33MHz Processor
- 4MB System RAM
- 2 PCMCIA Type II Slots/1 Type III Slot
- 9.5" Dual-Scan LCD Color Display
- 209MB 2.5" Hard Disk Drive
- Palmrest with Integrated Trackball
- Local Bus Video with 512KB VRAM
- MS-DOS 6.2, Microsoft Windows 3.1
- International Travelers Warranty
- 24-hour "Hot Swap" Warranty

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- 2 PCI 64-Bit Expansion Slots
- 4 ISA 16-Bit Expansion Slots
- 1 Combination PCI/ISA Slot
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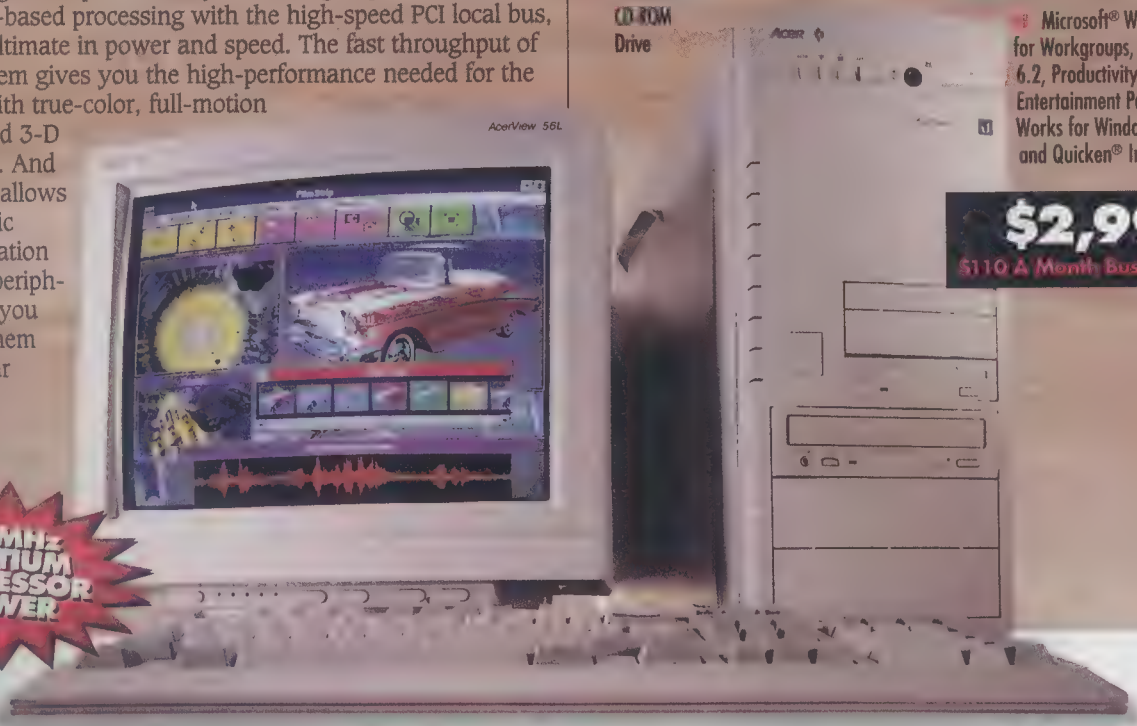

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- 16MB System RAM (Expandable to 128MB)
- 256KB Second-Level Cache
- 540MB IDE Fast Hard Disk Drive
- PCI Enhanced Local Bus IDE
- Panasonic 2X CD-ROM Drive
- 1.44MB Diskette Drive
- 2MB PCI Graphics Accelerator Card
- 17" .28mm Non-Interlaced Digital SVGA Color Monitor
- 2 PCI 64-Bit Expansion Slots, 4 ISA 16-Bit Expansion Slots
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- Microsoft Windows for Workgroups, MS-DOS 6.2, Productivity/Entertainment Packs, Works for Windows, and Quicken Installed

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- Intel Pentium/90MHz Processor
- 16MB System RAM (Expandable to 128MB)
- 256KB Second-Level Cache
- 540MB IDE Fast Hard Disk Drive
- PCI Enhanced Local Bus IDE
- Panasonic 2X CD-ROM Drive
- 1.44MB Diskette Drive
- 2MB PCI Graphics Accelerator Card
- 15" .28mm Non-Interlaced Digital SVGA Color Monitor
- 2 PCI 64-Bit Expansion Slots, 4 ISA 16-Bit Expansion Slots
- 1 Combination PCI/ISA Expansion Slot
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AcerPower 486DX2/66MHz

- Intel 486DX2/66MHz Processor
- 8MB System RAM (Expandable to 64MB)
- 128KB Second-Level Cache
- 420MB IDE Fast Hard Disk Drive
- Panasonic 2X CD-ROM Drive
- 1.44MB Diskette Drive
- 15" .28mm Non-Interlaced Digital SVGA Color Monitor
- 1MB PCI Graphics Accelerator Card
- 2 PCI 64-Bit Expansion Slots, 5 ISA 16-Bit Expansion Slots
- 1 Combination PCI/ISA Expansion Slot
- Microsoft Windows for Workgroups, MS-DOS 6.2, Productivity/Entertainment Packs, Works for Windows, and Quicken Installed

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AcerAcros 486DX2/66MHz

- Intel486DX2/66MHz Processor
- 4MB System RAM (Expandable to 64MB)
- 420MB IDE Fast Hard Disk Drive
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- 1.44MB Diskette Drive
- 1MB VESA Graphics Accelerator Card
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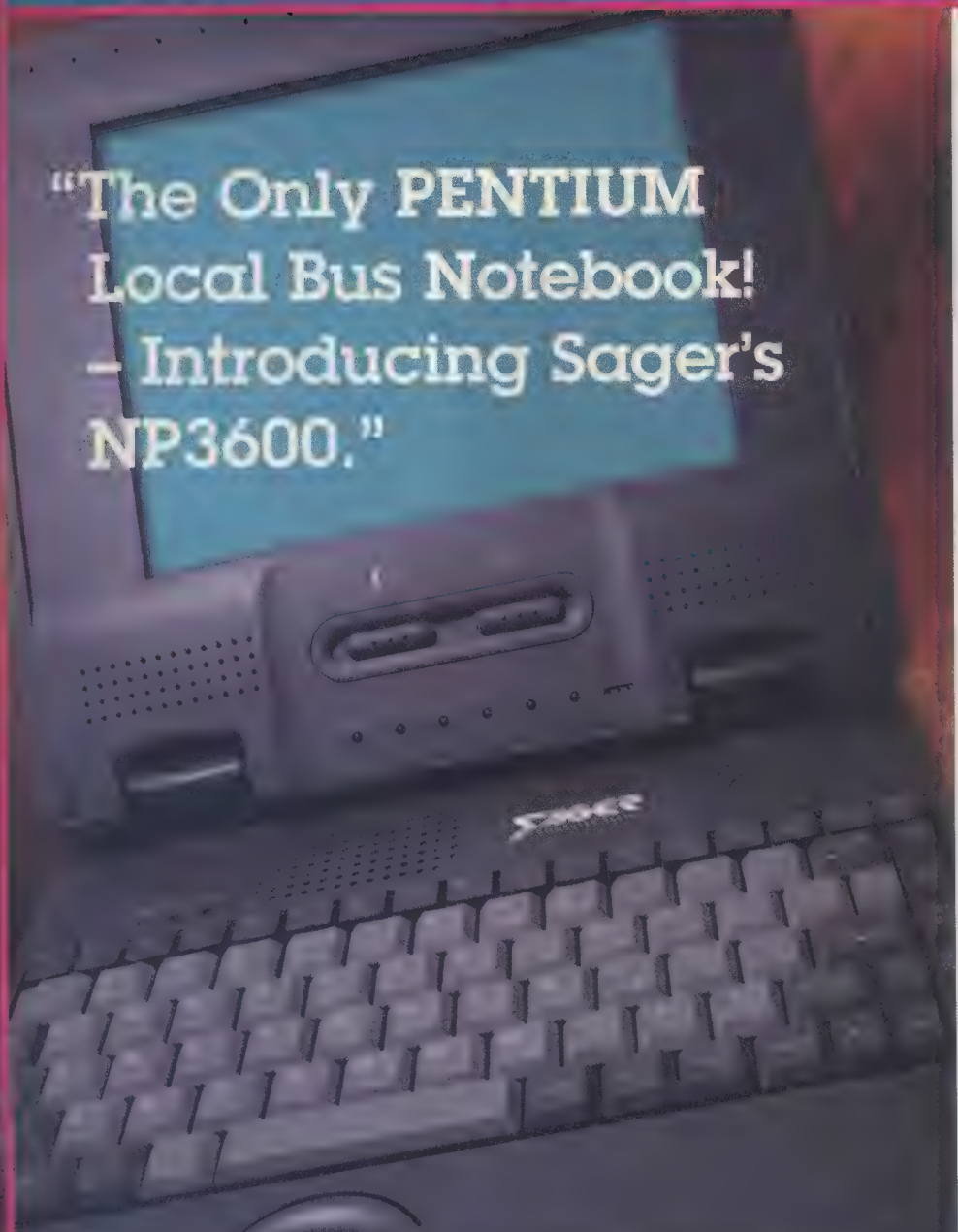

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PENTIUM NP3600 CONFIGURATIONS

- Intel Pentium™ 60/66MHz CPU
- 1MB Video RAM
- 32-bit VESA Local Bus Video with Windows Accelerator
- 32-bit Local Bus IDE
- Built-In Audio Chip, Microphone, & Speaker
- 8MB RAM Expandable to 40MB
- Removable 250MB Hard Drive (340, 520MB Optional)
- 3.5" 1 44MB Floppy Drive
- 9 5" 640x480 VGA Display, 256 Colors, CRT 1024x768 256 colors
- Simultaneous CRT & LCD Operation
- Extra Large Built-In 25mm Trackball
- 1 Type II &1 Type III PCMCIA Slots
- 46 Watt NiMH Battery
- 1 16C550 Compatible Serial Port
- 1 Parallel Port with ECP/EPP Support
- Ports for Ext Keyboard, Ext VGA Monitor & 200 Pin Connector for Docking Station
- Jacks - 1 line in & 1 line out
- 86-Key Keyboard
- Microsoft DOS 6 21
- Carrying Bag & AC/Adapter
- Weight 8.15lbs. (with Battery)
- 11.14"W x 10.31"D x 2.56"H
- Sager's Umbrella Protection Policy

NP3600 FEATURES

- Intel Pentium™ 64-bit performance
- Super Fast 32-bit VESA Local Bus Video with Windows Accelerator & 1MB Video RAM
- 32-bit Local Bus IDE, improved data transfer rate of up to 45%
- 1 PCMCIA Type III & 1 PCMCIA Type II Slots
- Built-in Audio Chip, Microphone, & Speaker (Now you can record, compress, store and playback voice, sound, and music to disk. Soundblaster and Microsoft Windows Sound System compatible)
- VESA Local Bus Power when used with Optional VL-Bus Docking Station
- 46 Watt Extra Large NiMH Battery
- Extra Large Built-In 25mm Trackball
- Large Palm Rest Area for Easy Typing
- Flash ROM for BIOS Upgrade through software
- 2-Hour Quick Charge

NP3600 / NP7500 OPTIONS

VL-Bus Docking Station
Numeric keypad
Car Adapter
PCMCIA Cards (Fax/Modem, Ethernet LAN Adapter & more)

R T A B L E S

486 NP7500 CONFIGURATIONS & FEATURES

- Intel SL enhanced CPU upgradeable to 486DX4 (486SX>DX>DX2>DX4)
- 1MB Video RAM
- Super Fast 32-bit VESA Local Bus Video with Windows Accelerator
- Super Fast 32-bit Local Bus IDE with improved data transfer rate of up to 45%
- Built-in Audio Chip, Microphone, & Speaker (Now you can record, compress, store and playback voice, sound, and music to disk
- Extra Large Capacity NiMH Battery – No Memory Effect and 40%-50% Longer Running/Operating Timespan
- Large 19mm Trackball Centered on Large Palm Rest Area for Easy Typing
- 2 PCMCIA Type I & II or 1 Type III IC Card Slot
- Flash ROM for BIOS Upgrade through software
- 4MB RAM expandable to 36MB
- Removeable 250MB Hard Drive (340, 520MB Optional) offers flexibility, upgradeability and security
- 3.5" 1.44MB Floppy Drive
- 9.5" 640x480, VGA Display 256 Colors or 64 Gray Shades CRT 1024x768 256 Colors
- Simultaneous CRT & LCD Operation
- 180° LCD Display Angle Rotation
- Built-in System Management Mode (SMM)
- Ports for 1S, 1P, Ext. keyboard, Ext.VGA monitor, & 200 Pin Connector for Docking Station
- Jacks - 1 line in & 1 line out
- 86-Key Keyboard
- Microsoft DOS 6.21
- Carrying Bag & AC/Adapter
- Weight 6.6lbs. (with Battery)
- 11.14"W x 9.48"D x 1.95"H
- 2-Hour Quick Charge
- VESA Local Bus Power when used with Optional VL-Bus Docking Station
- Sager's Umbrella Protection Policy

486 NP700 CONFIGURATIONS

- 1MB Video Ram
- 4MB RAM expandable to 16MB
- Removable 120MB Hard Drive (250, 340, 520MB Optional)
- 3.5" 1.44MB Floppy Drive
- 9.5" 640x480, VGA Display 256 Colors or 64 Gray Shades
- Large Built-In 16mm Trackball (Can be replaced with another module)
- PCMCIA Type I & II Slot
- Ports for 1S, 1P, Ext keyboard/keypad, VGA monitor & AT/Bus for expansion box
- 85-Key Keyboard
- Nickel Metal-Hydride battery
- Microsoft DOS 6.21
- Carrying Bag & AC/Adapter
- Weight 5.5lbs. with Battery
- 11.4"W x 8.6"D x 1.65"H
- Sager's Umbrella Protection Policy

NP700 FEATURES

- Module Pack Area: (Optional) Fax/Modem, PS/2 Mouse+COM 2, Audio
- PCMCIA Slot
- Intel 486 Upgradeable CPU (486SX >486DX >486DX2)
- 180° LCD Display Angle Rotation
- 2-Hour Quick Charge
- NiMH Battery. No memory effect, Longer Battery Life
- External Battery Pack. (Optional) Doubles Running Hours Screws Into Bottom Back of Notebook Raising & Angling Keyboard for Easy Typing

NP700 OPTIONS

FAX/Modem Module
PS/2 Mouse + COM 2 Port Module
Audio Module
Internal/External Battery Pack
Numeric Keypad
Car Adapter
Expansion Box
PCMCIA Cards (Fax/Modem, Ethernet LAN Adapter & more)

NP700

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- 1 CD ROM [illegible] HDD bay
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- VGA Monitor
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U.S. Robotics

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Cyrix

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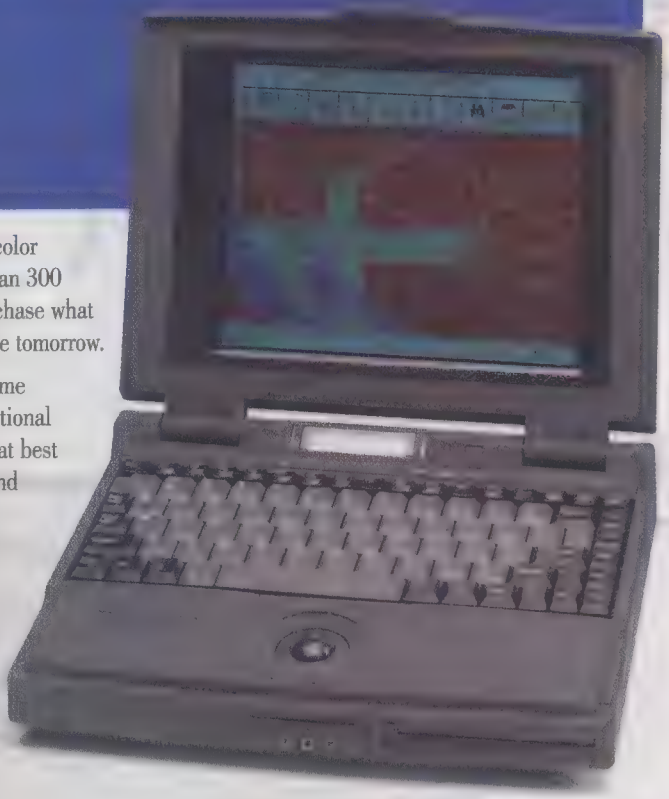

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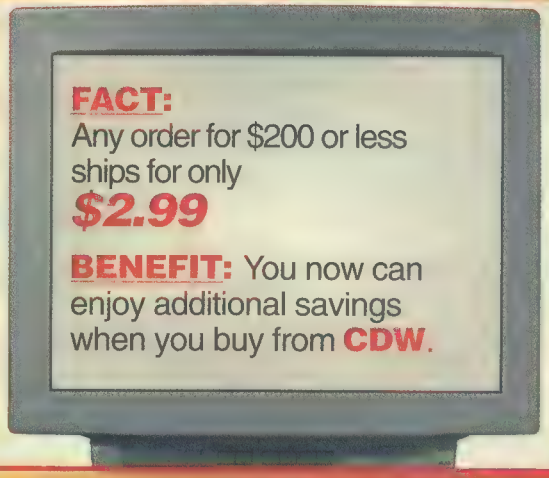

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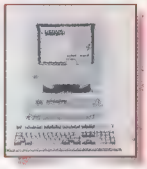

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OKILASER 400 2MB	CALL!
OKILASER 600 2MB	CALL!
PANASONIC 4410, 4430 2-4MB	CALL!
PANASONIC P4450I 2MB	CALL!
TI MICROLASER 1MB	CALL!
TI TM4000 4MB	CALL!
TOSHIBA NOTEBOOKS ALL MODELS	CALL!

Please Call CDW for the Best, Most Current Pricing and Availability Information.

PROCESSOR/UPGRADES

CYRIX 486DRX/2 Upg 40Mhz	247 44
INTEL DX2 50 OVERDRIVE	296 61
INTEL DX2 66 OVERDRIVE	412.52
KINGSTON SX/NOW 25MHZ	169 45
KINGSTON SX NOW 33MHZ	196 25
KINGSTON 486/NOW 33MHz	255 52
KINGSTON 486/NOW 33MHZ	438.30

MATH COPROCESSORS

INTEL 387SX 16/20/25MHZ	76.84
INTEL 387SX 33MHZ	89 63
INTEL 387SL	76 22
INTEL 387DX	79 83

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Circle 133 on reader service card.

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IBM

Rated "Best" PC World, June '94

IBM PS/ValuePoint Computers . . .

ValuePoint models Si, Desktop & Tower listed in this ad include:

◆ One year on-site warranty ◆ 16 bit ISA data bus ◆ 4 SIMM sockets total (3 open) ◆ OverDrive™ Upgradability ◆ Pentium™ ◆ OverDrive P24T ready (except 425SX/Si) ◆ 16 bit IDE hard drive interface ◆ VESA local bus video ◆ 128K Flash Memory BIOS ◆ IBM PC DOS 6.1 & Windows 3.1 pre-loaded (hard drive models only) ◆ 100W power supply (Si-space saver models) ◆ 200W power supply (T-tower models, D-desktop models, P-Pentium models) ◆ Mouse

ValuePoint Pentium models listed in this ad include:

◆ One year on-site warranty ◆ 64 bit ISA data bus ◆ (1) 32 bit PCI local bus expansion slot ◆ (1) Shared 32 bit PCI local bus/16 bit ISA expansion slot ◆ (2) 16 bit expansion slots ◆ 4 SIMM sockets total (2 open) ◆ 273 pin Zero Insertion Force (ZIF) processor socket ◆ Future OverDrive ready ◆ 16 bit IDE hard drive interface

Model	Drive	CPU	RAM	Max	Slots	Bays 3.5(5.25)	CDW	Price
425SX/Si	120MB	486SX/25	4MB	64MB	3 (ISA)	2(1)	37727	$895.00
425SX/Si	212MB	486SX/25	4MB	64MB	3 (ISA)	2(1)	37728	$995.00
433DX/Si	120MB	i486DX/33	4MB	64MB	3 (ISA)	2(1)	37730	$1259.00
433DX/S	212MB	i486DX/33	4MB	64MB	3 (ISA)	2(1)	37731	$1389.00
466DX/Si	120MB	i486DX2/66	4MB	64MB	3 (ISA)	2(1)	37732	$1659.00
466DX/Si	212MB	i486DX2/66	4MB	64MB	3 (ISA)	2(1)	34851	$1759.00
425SX/D	170MB	i486SX/25	4MB	64MB	5(ISA)	3(2)	34956	$1170.00
425SX/D	245MB	i486SX/25	4MB	64MB	5(ISA)	3(2)	38056	$1280.00
433SX/D	170MB	i486SX/33	4MB	64MB	5(ISA)	3(2)	38058	$1260.00
433SX/D	245MB	i486SX/33	4MB	64MB	5(ISA)	3(2)	38060	$1370.00
433DX/D	212MB	i486DX/33	4MB	64MB	5(ISA)	3(2)	34957	$1559.00
433DX/D	340MB	i486DX/33	4MB	64MB	5(ISA)	3(2)	38061	$1719.00
450DX2/D	212MB	i486DX2/50	4MB	64MB	5(ISA)	3(2)	38063	$1670.00
450DX2/D	340MB	i486DX2/50	4MB	64MB	5(ISA)	3(2)	34801	$1840.00
466DX2/D	212MB	i486DX2/66	4MB	64MB	5(ISA)	3(2)	38065	$2000.00
466DX2/D	340MB	i486DX2/66	4MB	64MB	5(ISA)	3(2)	38066	$2159.00
433DX/T	212MB	486DX/33	4MB	64MB	8(ISA)	4(2)	39393	$1679.00
433DX/T	340MB	i486DX/33	4MB	64MB	8(ISA)	4(2)	39394	$1829.00
450DX2/T	212MB	i486DX2/50	4MB	64MB	8(ISA)	4(2)	39396	$1780.00
450DX2/T	420MB	i486DX2/50	4MB	64MB	8(ISA)	4(2)	39398	$2260.00
466DX2/T	340MB	i486DX2/66	4MB	64MB	8(ISA)	4(2)	39400	$2269.00
466DX2/T	527MB	i486DX2/66	4MB	64MB	8(ISA)	4(2)	39401	$2699.00
P60/D	527MB	Pentium/60MHz	16MB	128MB	2 (ISA) 2(PCI)	3(2)	33715	$3719.00

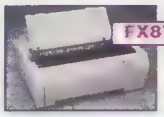
Call for Genuine Epson Accessories!

EPSON

EPSON Ink Jet Printers

Ink Jet Printers	Nozzles	Type	Resolution	Draft CPS	LQ CPS	Fonts	Buffer	Emulation	Paper Bin	Interface	Price	CDW
Stylus 300	48	Thermal	360 DPI	N/A	110	6 LQ(4 Scalable)	24K	ESC/P2	100 Sheet	Parallel	$228.80	31592
Stylus 800	48	Piezo	360 DPI	N/A	150	7 LQ(4 Scalable)	32K	ESC/P2	100 Sheet	Parallel	$251.97	28148

EPSON Dot Matrix Printers



Dot Matrix Printers	Pins	CPS HS Draft	CPS Draft/ Utility	CPS NLQ	CPS LQ	Color	Buffer	Interface	Emulation	Width	Price	CDW
AP2250	9		240	48			4K	Parallel	A	Narrow	$115.63	24064
AP3250	24		200		72		11K	Parallel	A	Narrow	$171.95	22301
AP3260	24		270		100	Opt.	11K	Parallel	B	Narrow	$197.00	30964
LX-810	9		240	48			4K	Parallel	A	Narrow	$164.95	12540
FX-870	9		380	68			24K	Parallel	A, D	Narrow	$267.59	24686
FX-1170	9		380	68			24K	Parallel	A, D	Wide	$354.95	25046
LQ-570+	24		337		112		8K	Parallel	A, B	Narrow	$237.97	28765
LQ-1070+	24		337		112		8K	Parallel	A, B	Wide	$365.35	30961
LQ-870	24	413	300		138		8K	Parallel	A, B	Narrow	$444.91	19683
LQ-1170	24	413	300		138		8K	Parallel	A, B	Wide	$609.93	19684
LQ-2550	24		500		167	Yes	8K	Par/Ser	F	Wide	$898.08	13693
DFX-5000 Plus	9	560	420	84			20K	Par/Ser	A, D	Wide	$1372.84	38206
DFX-8000	9	1066	960	192			3K	Par/Ser	C, E	Wide	$2269.45	13084

A=ESC/P B=ESC/P2 C=IBM Proprinter D=IBM Proprinter II E=FX-850,1050, DFX-5000 F=ESC/P LQ

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Circle 134 on reader service card.

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101	102	103	104	105	106	107	108	109	110	111	112	113	114	115	116	117	118	119	120	121	122	123	124	125
126	127	128	129	130	131	132	133	134	135	136	137	138	139	140	141	142	143	144	145	146	147	148	149	150
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Please answer questions below:

1. **Where do you use your computer?** (Check one only)
   A ☐ Home B ☐ Business C ☐ Both
2. **What kinds of computers do you use?** (Check all that apply)
   D ☐ IBM/Compatible Laptop E ☐ IBM/Compatible Desktop F ☐ MAC
3. **Do you plan to buy any of the hardware or software mentioned below in the next three months?** (Check all that apply)

HARDWARE
G ☐ PC
H ☐ MAC
I ☐ Laptop
J ☐ Printer
K ☐ Monitor
L ☐ Disk/Tape Back-up
M ☐ Add-in Board
N ☐ Modem
O. ☐ Input Device
P ☐ Local Area Network

SOFTWARE
Q ☐ Accounting
R ☐ Spreadsheet
S ☐ Personal Finance
T ☐ Desktop Publishing
U ☐ Word Processor
V ☐ Database Manager
W ☐ Graphics
X ☐ Utility
Y ☐ Communications
Z ☐ Windows/Multi-tasking
1 ☐ Programming Language, Compiler
2 ☐ Integrated/Multifunction
3 ☐ CAD

4. **From which of the following sources do you purchase personal computer products?** (Check all that apply)
   4 ☐ Specialty Computer Retail Stores 6 ☐ Direct from Manufacturers
   5 ☐ Mail Order Firms 7 ☐ Other

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Company Name

Address

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5 ☐ Please send me a one-year (12 issue) subscription to PC/Computing for $16.94 (U.S. price). all other countries add $16.00 for additional postage.

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O. ☐ Input Device
P. ☐ Local Area Network

SOFTWARE
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R. ☐ Spreadsheet
S. ☐ Personal Finance
T. ☐ Desktop Publishing
U. ☐ Word Processor
V. ☐ Database Manager
W. ☐ Graphics
X. ☐ Utility
Y. ☐ Communications
Z. ☐ Windows/Multi-tasking
1. ☐ Programming Language/Compiler
2. ☐ Integrated/Multifunction
3. ☐ CAD

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Title | Telephone

Company Name

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Seagate

FACTORY NEW 1 5 YEAR WARRANTY

IDE			
130MB	ST3145A	15MS 3 5X1	$ 172
128MB	ST9145AG	16MS 2 5"	299
260MB	ST3290A	16MS 3 5X1"	218
340MB	ST3390A	12MS 3 5"	265
209MB	ST9235AG	16MS 2 5"	379
452MB	ST3550A	12MS 3 5X1'	334
540MB	ST3655A	12MS 3 5"	413
SCSI			
457MB	ST3550N SCSI-2	12MS 3.5X1"	470
540MB	ST3600N SCSI-2	11MS 3 5X1"	490
343MB	ST3390N SCSI-2	12MS 3 5X1"	339
1420MB	ST41650N	15MS 3 5X1"	1039
1350MB	ST41600N	12MS FH	1559
1 2GB	ST11200N SCSI-2	10MS 3 5"	770
1 2GB	ST31200N	9MS 3 5X1"	750
1 2GB	ST41200N	14MS FH	959
2 1GB	ST42100N SCSI-2	14MS FH	1350
2 1GB	ST42400 SCSI-2	11MS FH	1559
3 55GB	ST43400N SCSI-2	10MS FH	2025
1 7GB	ST11900N	9MS 3 5'	1192
1 7GB	BARRACUDA-I ST11950N SCSI-2 3 5"		1477
2 1GB	BARRACUDA-II ST12550N SCSI-2 3 5'		1650
2 2GB	ST12400N SCSI-2	12MS 3 5"	1395
4 1GB	ST15150N-W	8MS 3 5"	CALL
9GB	ST410800N-W	11MS FH	CALL

Maxtor

FACTORY NEW 2 YEAR WARRANTY

IDE			
130MB	7131A	14MS 3 5X1'	185
170MB	7171A	13MS 3 5X1'	186
273MB	7273A	12MS 3 5X1"	252
345MB	7345A	15MS 3 5"	263
540MB	7546A	8 5MS 3 5"	450
SCSI			
273MB	7273S	15MS 3 5X1"	CALL
290MB	7290S	14MS 3 5X1'	CALL
345MB	7345S SCSI-2	12MS 3 5"	339
540MB	540S	8MS 3 5X1"	571
1 2GB	1240S SCSI-2	8MS 3 5"	1245

CONNER

FACTORY NEW – 1 YEAR WARRANTY

IDE			
170MB	CFA170A	17MS 3 5X1	$ 179
212MB	CFS210A	12MS 3 5X1"	198
250MB	CP30254H	14MS 3 5"	226
340MB	CFA340A	14MS 3 5X1"	271
420MB	CFS420A	14MS 3.5X1"	293
540MB	CP30544	10MS 3 5X1	435
SCSI			
170MB	CFA170S	13MS 3 5X1'	195
340NB	CFA340S	13MS 3 5X1"	305
540MB	CP3540 SCSI-2	10MS 3 5"	571
1GB	CP1060S SCSI-2	10MS 3 5"	812

HEWLETT PACKARD

FACTORY NEW 5 YEAR WARRANTY

SCSI			
1 0GB	C2247	10MS 3 5'	799
2 1GB	C2490	8 9MS 3 5"	1489

TOSHIBA

5 YEAR WARRANTY ON 3 5"
1 YEAR WARRANTY ON 2 5"

SUPERFAST SCSI-2			
200MB	IDE MK2224	17MS 2 5'	$418
200MB	SCSI MK2224	17MS 2 5"	439
340MB	IDE MK2326	2 5"	588

1 x 9 $48
4 x 9 $168
70 NS SIMMS

4MB X 9-80NS S MM-PC	160	255K X 9-100NS SIMM	13	1MB X 9-70NS SIPP	53		
4MB X 9-70NS SIMM	188	256K X 9-80NS SIMM	14	1MB X 9-60NS SIPP	55		
4MB X 9-60NS SIMM	175	256K X 9-70NS SIMM	15	256K X 9-100NS SIPP	18		
1MB X 9-100NS 9 CHIP SIMM	40	256K X 9-60NS SIMM	18	256K X 9-80NS SIPP	19		
1MB X 9-80NS 3 CHIP SIMM	40	1MB X 8-80NS SIMM	42	256K X 9-70NS SIPP	20		
1MB X 9-80NS 9 CHIP SIMM	46	1MB X 8-70NS SIMM	45	256K X 9-60NS SIPP	23		
1MB X 9-70NS 3 CHIP SIMM	42	4MB X 8-80NS SIMM	150	256 X 36 – 1MB	50		
1MB X 9-70NS 9 CHIP SIMM	48	4MB X 8-70NS SIMM	185	512 X 36 – 2MB	85		
1MB X 9-60NS 3 CHIP SIMM	44	1MB X 9-100NS SIPP	45	1 X 36 – 4MB	175		
1MB X 9-60NS 9 CHIP SIMM	50	1MB X 9-80NS SIPP	61	2 X 36 – 8MB	375		
1MB X 9-53NS 9 CHIP SIMM	55			4 X 36 – 16MB	695		
16MB X 9-70NS SIMM	775						

MOTHER BOARDS

OPTI	
386DX-33-64K CACHE W/CPU	CALL
386DX-33-256K CACHE W/CPU	CALL
386DX-40-84K CACHE W/CPU	CALL
386DX-40-256K CACHE W/CPU	CALL
486SX-25-64K CACHE W/CPU	CALL
486DX-33-64K CACHE W/CPU	CALL
486DX-33-256K CACHE W/CPU	CALL
486DX 50-256K CACHE W/CPU	CALL
OCEAN	
JAGUAR 386DX-40 6-ISA, 8-30P	CALL
486SX-25 6-ISA, 33VLB DCA CACHE 8-30	CALL
486SX-33 6-ISA, 3VLB, DCA CACHE, 8-30P	CALL
486DX-40 6 ISA, 3VLB DCA CACHE, 8-33P	CALL
486DX2-66 6-ISA 3VLB, DCA CACHE 8-30P	CALL
PENTIUM PCI BOARDS	
MICRONICS M5PL Pentium 60MHZ 5-ISA 3-PCI, 256K, 4-72P, IDE, I/O	CALL
AIR 60MHZ, 4-EISA, 2-PCI SCSI IDE, IO	CALL
PENTIUM VESA BOARDS	
TYAN 60MHZ, 8ISA, 3-VESA, 256K UP TO 2MG	CALL
OCEAN 660MHZ 8-ISA, 2-VESA, 256K HEADLAND	CALL
AIR 560MHZ 7-ISA 3-VESA 256K, IDE/IO	CALL
GREEN PC BOARDS	
OCEAN DX2 6-ISA, 3-VESA, DCA CACHE	CALL
FORTRESS 486DX2-66 7-ISA, 3-VESA, 256K	CALL
OCEAN DX2 66, 6-ISA, 3-VESA, 256K, IDE I/O	CALL
IBM - 66MHZ AT 33MHZ PRICES	
ISA 486SLC 66, 7-ISA 16K, 8-30 PIN SIMMS	CALL
VESA 486SLC-66 7-ISA, 3-VESA, 16K, 8-30P	CALL
AMERICAN DIGICOM	
486SX-25 ISA 128K	CALL
486DX2-66 ISA 128K	CALL
486DX 33 VESA 256K	CALL
486DX2-66 VESA 256K	CALL
NICE Made in U.S.A.	
MINI 486DX-33 5-ISA, 3-ELSA, 2VBL, 256K,8-30P, ZLF	CALL
MINI 486DX-50 5-ISA 3-EISA,2-VELB 256K 8-30PZLF	CALL
MINI 486DX2-66 5-ISA, 3-EISA, 2-VLB, 1 MEG 8 30P, ZIF	CALL
EISA/2 486DX-50 6-EISA 2-ISA 512K, 16-30P ZIF	CALL
SUPER 486DX2-33 8-EISA 1-VLB 256K, 16-30P ZIF	CALL
SUPER 486DX2-50 8-EISA 1-VLB 512K, 16-30P ZIF	CALL
SUPER 486DX2-66 8-EISA 1-VLB 1MEG, 16-30P ZIF	CALL
A.I.R. Made in U.S.A.	
486SX-25 8-ISA, 3-VESA 256K 8-30P, ZIF	CALL
486DX2-33 8-ISA, 3-VL 256K 8-30P ZIF	CALL
486DX2-66 8-ISA, 3-VESA 256K 8-30P, ZIF	CALL
486DX2-66 7-ISA, 2-VESA 256K 8-30P, IDE, SCSI, I/O	CALL
486DX2-50 8-ISA, 3-VESA 256K, 4-72P, ZIF	CALL
486DX2 66 8-ISA 3-VESA 256K, 4-72P, ZIF	CALL
VEGA Made in U.S.A.	
486DX-33 8-ISA, 3-VESA, 256K, 8-30P, ZIF	CALL
486DX-33 8-ISA, 3-VESA, 256K,8-30P,ZIF	CALL
486DX-660 8-ISA, 3-VESA, 256K, 8-30P, ZIF	CALL
486DX2-66 4-PCI 5-ISA, 3-VESA, 256K, ZIF	CALL
486DX2-66, 8-ISA, 3VESA 256K, ZIF	CALL
MICRONICS (U.S.A.)	
MX-30 486DX 33 8-ISA, 2VESA 256K, 4-72P	CALL
JX-30 486DX2-33 8-ISA, 2VESA IDE , 4-72P	CALL
JX-30 486DX2-66 8-ISA, 2VESA IDE 4-72P	CALL
EISA-3, 486DX-33 8-32, 256K, 4-72P	CALL
EISA-3, 486DX-66 8-32 256K, 4-72P	CALL
M4P-3 486DX2-66 6-ISA, 3-PCI, 256K,4-72P, GREEN	CALL
M5PI PENTIUM, 60MHZ, 5-ISA, 3-PCI, 256K, 4-72P, IDE, I/O	CALL
MYLEX (U.S.A.)	
486DX2-66 256K MULTI I/O	CALL
486DX-50 EISA 256K MULTI I/O	CALL
486DX2-66 VESA 64K MULTI I/O	CALL
486DX2-66 EISA/VESA 256K MULTI I/O	CALL
AMI Made in U.S.A.	
S-VOY 486DX-33, 7-ISA, 2VESA, 256K, 8-30P, IDE	CALL
S-VOY 486DX2-66 7-ISA, 2VESA 256K, 4-72P, IDE	CALL
ENT-IV 486DX-33 8-EISA,2-VESA 256K, 16-30P	CALL
ENT-IV 486DX2-66 8-EISA, 2 VESA, 256K, 16-30P	CALL
S-VOY 486DX2-66, 5-ISA, 2PCI, 256K, 8-30P, SCSI, IDE	CALL
EISA-3 486DX2-66, 8-32, 256K, 4-72P	CALL

Quantum

FACTORY NEW – 2 YEAR WARRANTY ELS & LPS
5 YEAR WARRANTY ON P. DRIVES
1 YEAR WARRANTY ON 2.5" DRIVES

CAPACITY	M/N	SPEED	SIZE	PRICE
IDE				
127MB	ELS127A	17MS	3 5X1'	$181
170MB	ELS170A	17MS	3 5X1"	193
270MB	ELS270A	16MS	3 5X1"	259
340MB	LPS340A	16MS	3 5X1"	265
540MB	LPS540A	10MS	3 5X1"	436
SCSI				
170MB	ELS170S	17MS	3 5X1"	195
270MB	LPS270S	16MS	3 5X1"	270
340MB	LPS340S	16MS	3 5X1"	265
540MB	LPS540S SCSI-2	10MS	3 5X1'	436
1GB	P1080S SCSI-2	10MS	3 5X1'	879
1 2GB	P1225S SCSI-2	10MS	3 5"	884
1 8GB	P1800S SCSI-2	10MS	3 5"	999

MICROPOLIS

FACTORY NEW - 5 YEAR WARRANTY

IDE			
976MB	2210A	10MS 3 5"	$808
1 6GB	2217A	10MS 3 5'	1030
SCSI-2			
976MB	MC2210	10MS 3 5'	808
1 2GB	MC4110	9MS 3 5X1"	740
1 2GB	MC1598	15MS FH	811
1 6GB	MC1908	10MS FH	1099
1 75GB	MC2217	10MS 3 5"	1030
2 0GB	MC1548	14MS FH	1173
2 1GB	MC1926	11MS 3 5'	1350
3 6GB	MC1936	11MS FH	2145
4 1GB	MC4410	8MS 3 5"	CALL
9GB	MC1991	11MS FH	CALL

digital

FACTORY NEW FULL WARRANTY
DISK DRIVES FOR POWER USERS

SCSI-II			
535MB	DSP3053L	9 5MS 3 5X1"	620
1 0GB	DSP3107L	9 5MS 3 5X1"	770
1 0GB	VP3107	9MS 3 5X1"	CALL
1 3GB	DSP3133L	9 5MS 3 5X1"	1040
1 6GB	DSP3160	9 5MS 3 5"	1065
2 1GB	DSP3210	9MS 3 5"	1370
2 2GB	VP3215	9MS 3 5X1"	CALL
3 5GB	DSP5350	12MS FH	2205
4 0GB	DSP5400	12MS FH	2452
4 3GB	SP3430	9MS 3 5"	CALL

FUJITSU

FACTORY NEW 5 YEAR WARRANTY

IDE			
520MB	M2624T	12MS 3 5	487
SCSI			
1 2GB	M2694ESA	10MS 3 5"	780
2 1GB	M2654S	12MS FH	1343

WESTERN DIGITAL

FACTORY NEW 3 YEAR WARRANTY

IDE			
212MB	WD2200	12MS 3 5X1"	$ 205
250M6	WD2250	14MS 3 5X1"	219
340MB	WD2340	12MS 3 5X1"	268
420MB	AC2420	13MS 3 5X1"	286
540MB	WD2540	11MS 3 5X1"	402

DYNAMIC RAMS

1MB X 1-100NS	$6.00
1MB X 1-80NS	6.25
1MB X 1-70NS	6.50
1MB X 1-60NS	6.75
256K X 1-150NS	3.00
256K X 1-120NS	3.25
256K X 1 100NS	3.50
256 X 1-80NS	3.75
256K X 1-70NS	3.75
256K X 1-60 NS	3.75
256K X 4-100NS	6.00
256K X 4-80NS	6.25
256K X 4-70NS	6.50
256K X 4-60NS	6.75

CACHE

8 X 8-15	5.00
32 X 8-15	16.00
8 X 8-25	4.00
32 X 8-25	7.80
64 X 4-25	8.00
16 X 4-25	5.00
8 X 8-20	4.50
32 X 8-20	9.00
64 X 4-20	10.00
16 X 4-20	5.50
16 X 4-15	9.00
64 X 1-20	18.00
64 X 1-15	20 00

MATH CO-PROCESSORS

INTEL	
8087 5MHZ INTEL	49.00
8087 2 8MHZ INTEL	139.00
8087 1 1MHZ INTEL	89.00
80287-6 6MHZ INTEL	49.00
80287 8 8MHZ INTEL	49.00
80287-10 10MHZ INTEL	59.00
80287XL 10MHZ INTEL	75.00
80287XL12 12MHZ INTEL	75.00
80387SX 16 16MHZ INTEL	75.00
80387SX 20 20HZ INTEL	75.00
80387SX 25 25HZ INTEL	75.00
80387DX 16 16MHZ INTEL	75.00
80387DX 20 20MHZ INTEL	75.00
80387DX 25 25MHZ INTEL	75.00
80387DX 33 33MHZ INTEL	75.00
80487SX 25 INTEL	375.00
OVERDRIVE SX DX33	499.00
OVERDRIVE SX DX25	299.00
OVERDRIVE SX DX20	299.00
RAPID CAD	199.00
CYRIX	
83D87DX 16 16MHZ CYRIX	75.00
83D87DX 20 20MHZ CYRIX	75.00
83D87DX 25 25MHZ CYR X	75.00
3D87DX 33 33MHZ CYR X	75.00
83D87DX 40 40MHZ CYRIX	85.00
83S87SX16 16MHZ CYRIX	69.00
83S87SX20 20MHZ CYRIX	69.00
83S87SX25 25MHZ CYR X	69.00
82S87XL CYR X	69.00
WEITEK	
3167 33MHZ WEITEK	295.00
4167 25MHZ WEITEK	295.00
4167 33MHZ WE TEK	495.00
IIT	
2C87 8 8MHZ IIT	54.00
2C87 10 10MHZ IIT	54.00
2C87-12 12MHZ IIT	60.00
2C87 20 20MHZ IIT	64.00
3C87 16 16MHZ IIT	69.00
3C87 20 20MHZ IIT	69.00
3C87 25 25MHZ IIT	69.00
3C87 33 33MHZ IIT	69.00
3C87 40 40MHZ IIT	75.00
3S87SX 16 16MHZ IIT	69.00
3S87SX 20 20MHZ IIT	69.00
3S87SX 25 25MHZ IIT	69.00
3S87SX 33 33MHZ IIT	69.00

INTEL CPUs

386 DX	
80386 DX/25	85.00
80386 DX/33	75.00
AMD DZ40	80.00
486DX/SX	
80486 DX/25	250.00
80486 DX33	299.00
80486 DX 50	399 00
80486 DX-2/50	425.00
80486 DX-2/66	499.00
80486 SX.25	125.00
80486 SX:33	145.00

PS 2 HARD DRIVES

PS/2 50, 50Z, 55SX, 60, 70, 80 P70

INTERNAL DRIVE KITS May be used as a high performance replacement or to co-exist with the original IBM drive. Compatible with DOS 3 3 4 01 5 0 DOS/2 2 0 and Novell includes IDE or SCSI-2 microchannel controller hard drive mounting kit ribbon and power cable manual and hardware

109MB 19MS IDE	383.00
125MB 15MS IDE	414.00
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200MB 15MS IDE	453.00
200MB 15MS SCSI	513.00
340MB 13MS IDE	589.00
340MB 13MS SCSI	669.00
512MB 12MS IDE	1043.00
512MB 12MS SCSI	1284.00
1 2GB 12MS SCSI	1443.00

PS/2 MODEL 25, 30, 30-286

INTERNAL DRIVE KITS - includes controller drive mounting kit cables and hardware Supports DOS 5 0 Windows 3 1

42MB HARD DRIVE KIT	189 00
108MB HARD DRIVE KIT	253.00
125MB HARD DRIVE KIT	284.00
200MB HARD DRIVE KIT	323.00
MICROCHANNEL CONTROLLER	
IDE	169.00
SCSI-2	179.00

IDE CONTROL ER supports all internal IDE drives Zero slot installation for model 50 & 50Z

SCSI 2 CONTROL ER supports 7 internal or external SCSI drives CD Roms & Tape Backups with 7 year warranty Both support DOS 5 0 Windows & OS/2 compatible with existing IBM drive and controllers

CALL FOR LATEST SUPER PRICES 1-800-457-6937

FOR MEMORY PRODUCTS NOT LISTED – CALL FOR PRICES AND AVAILABILITY

TECHNICAL SUPPORT 215-922-4640 FAX 1-215-922-0116 636679

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WORLDWIDE TECHNOLOGIES 437 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19106 Customer Service 215-922-4640

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7/94

Circle 251 on reader service card.

MIDWEST MICRO'S MAKING HEADLINES

A PULITZER PRIZE

For outstanding achievement in customer satisfaction...the prize goes to MidWest Micro. After more than a decade in the business, MidWest Micro is still making headlines across America with top-of-the line products, great value and friendly service. You know you can count on us for the latest technology at the best possible prices.

HOT OFF THE PRESS

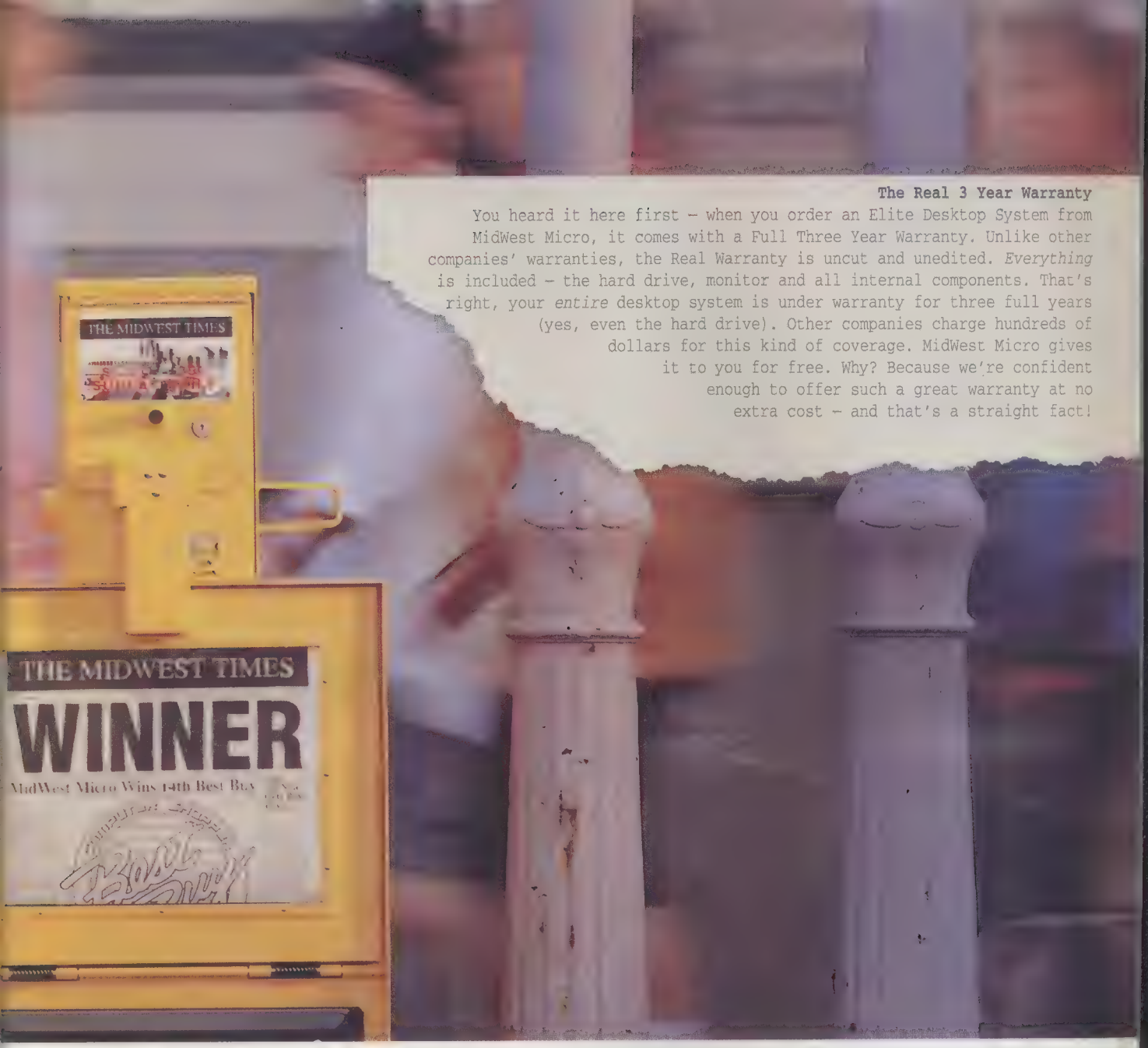
At MidWest Micro, we always go out of our way for you. We even give you the option of custom configuring a desktop system in one of five sleek case designs (slimline, desktop, mini-tower, middle-tower and full-tower). We'll install fax modems, more RAM, a larger hard drive and more.

PC Computing ★★★★★

energy EPA POLLUTION PREVENTER

3 YEAR

Circle 276 on reader service card.



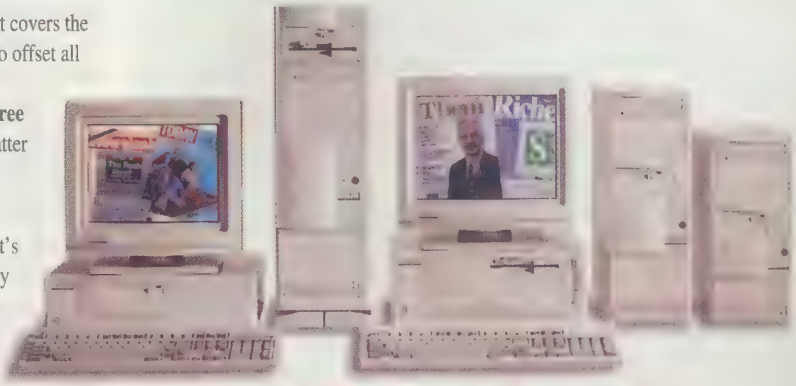
The Real 3 Year Warranty

You heard it here first – when you order an Elite Desktop System from MidWest Micro, it comes with a Full Three Year Warranty. Unlike other companies' warranties, the Real Warranty is uncut and unedited. *Everything* is included – the hard drive, monitor and all internal components. That's right, your *entire* desktop system is under warranty for three full years (yes, even the hard drive). Other companies charge hundreds of dollars for this kind of coverage. MidWest Micro gives it to you for free. Why? Because we're confident enough to offer such a great warranty at no extra cost – and that's a straight fact!

FRONT PAGE NEWS

MidWest Micro tops the news with the Real Three Year Warranty that covers the monitor, hard drive and all internal components – but we don't want to offset all the other services our customers enjoy, like a **30-Day Money Back Guarantee, Immediate Parts Replacement Policy, Lifetime Toll-Free Technical Support and an On-Line Bulletin Board Service**. No matter how the other companies word it, they just don't deliver service and support like this.

Great products, a well-informed sales team and unbeatable prices — it's no wonder MidWest Micro has earned 14 Computer Shopper Best Buy Awards (chosen by Shopper readers) and PC Computing's Five-Star Rating for outstanding service and support. (Check out the article in *The MidWest Times!*) MidWest Micro has been on a winning streak since 1989, and we don't plan on slowing down anytime soon. We're not the only ones winning, though. With affordable technology and friendly service, when you buy from MidWest Micro, you win, too.



MidWest Micro

1-800-682-7248

Circle 272 on reader service card.

News Never Traveled So Fast!

"Did you say clock-tripling speeds?"
"I heard the Three-Year Warranty is for real!"
"Martha told me that buying an Elite System was the smartest thing she's ever done."
"Well, Albert and I just ordered an Elite for our grandson."

What's All The Gossip About?

Did you hear about Elite PCI and Pentium™ Systems from MidWest Micro? It's certainly no rumor that Intel's® Pentium processor operates twice as fast as a DX2-66 processor. Plus, superscalar architecture lets it execute two instructions at the same time, dramatically speeding up operation. For such high performance, the price of Elite Systems is very trim.

Pssst...Pass It On

Superior compatibility, automatic configuration and high-speed data handling are making PCI (Peripheral Component Interconnect) Local Bus the talk of the town. Since these systems are self-configuring, adding network cards, video cards and other peripherals has never been easier. (Just ask Martha!)

intel inside pentium PROCESSOR

Seagate

WINDOWS FOR WORKGROUPS

Another highlight of PCI Technology is great video performance. It gives you up to 16.7 million colors (that won't wash out after you shampoo) and 1280 x 1024 resolution. And with refresh rates up to 90 Hz, screens redraw faster than you can say split ends!

What Else Is New?

What's new? Elite's new line of Pentium Systems travel at an amazing 90 MHz processing speed, one of the fastest speeds available. Known as P5-90s, these Elites also run cooler and draw significantly less power. If you want to make some permanent waves, order an Elite P5-90 Pentium System from MidWest Micro.

Wait, There's More...

The curling iron isn't all that's hot – so are Elite DX4 VESA Systems! We're talking processing speeds up to 75 and 100 MHz! News hasn't traveled this fast since the grapevine was invented! Plus, with a powerful VESA Local Bus, you get increased throughput and high-speed video.

MidWest Micro's Intel-based Systems give you more than high speed and excellent performance. They also come with large hard drives and MS-DOS 6.2® and WFW™ 3.11 installed. Some configurations even include a double speed multimedia CD-ROM drive and an internal send and receive fax modem! Call the company that everybody's talking about – call MidWest Micro today.

Pentium technology is a lot more than just small talk. It can execute two instructions at once, produce processing speeds up to 90 MHz and make everyday applications run even better. Pentium processors also provide the power needed for new multimedia applications and desktop video conferencing.

And if clock-tripling VESA performance dominates your conversations, you need an Elite DX4 VESA System. With a powerful VESA Local Bus, fast processing speed and double-speed CD-ROM drive, this System never makes you wait! If you'd like to talk more about Elite DX4 and Pentium Systems, call one of the friendly sales representatives at MidWest Micro – they love to talk, too!

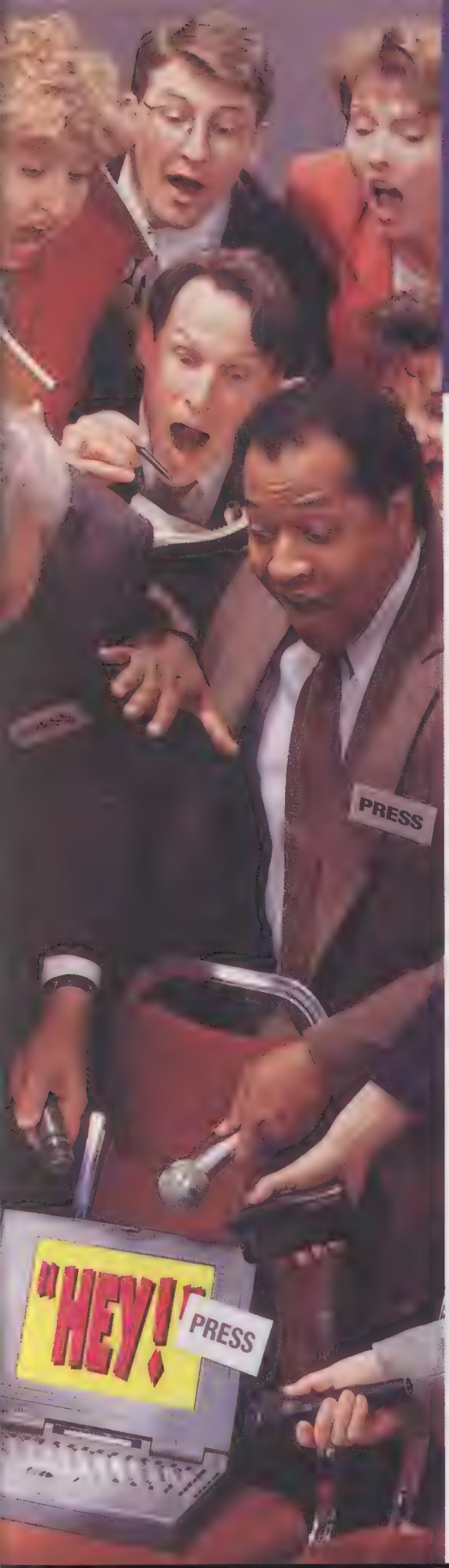
MidWest Micro

1-800-682-7248

AD#M701

Circle 237 on reader service card.

"At the top [illegible] the
[illegible] certainly lives up to
its name. [illegible] display is well
[illegible] by its enhanced, high performance chip,
[illegible] and quality assembly. When you add
to that its [illegible] life and toll-free support, at a
[illegible] price, the [illegible] is the class of this field."
Computer Shopper, May 1994



THE ELITE SOUNDBOOK STEALS THE SPOTLIGHT

This Notebook's Got Something To Say

There's simply no better way to get the word out than with the Elite SoundBook from MidWest Micro. Featuring built-in audio capabilities and the processor, hard drive and screen of choice, the Elite SoundBook is always attracting attention (even when it's not supposed to)!

It Can't Keep Quiet!

It's hard for the SoundBook to keep quiet since it comes with a built-in microphone and speaker, external jacks and bundled audio software. The software lets you easily record, compress, store and playback voices, sounds or music. Plus, the Elite features a PCMCIA Type III slot so you can add modems, flash memory, network adapters, and more.

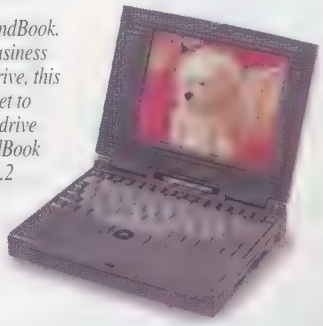
Attracting Attention From Every Angle

The SoundBook also attracts attention with its visual performance. Available in monochrome, dual-scan color and active-matrix color, these screens make presentations look great .

A Keynote Speaker

Even when it's part of the audience, the Elite SoundBook steals the spotlight. Business presentations have never looked or sounded so good! And it comes in a variety of configurations, so you can pick the one that best suits your needs. You can even select a processor with a clock-tripling 100 MHz processing speed! With its long battery life, up to 520 Mb hard drive and local bus video with 1 Mb video DRAM, this lightweight notebook really makes a statement. Invite the Elite SoundBook to your next press conference. It won't just be the topic of discussion—it'll be the main speaker!

The media can't stay away from the Elite SoundBook. With 4 Mb of RAM (expandable to 20 Mb), business audio features and a user replaceable hard drive, this notebook is hot news! And the fact that you get to choose your own processor, screen and hard drive has really got reporters interested. The SoundBook even comes with Lotus Organizer, MS-DOS 6.2 and WFW 3.11 installed. Whether you'd like the color (6.7 lbs.) or monochrome (6.2 lbs.) version, the Elite SoundBook steals the show.



News On a Lighter Note

Ready for more good news? The Elite 486SX-33 SubNote weighs only 3.9 lbs. and comes with a dual-scan color or monochrome screen. With its high-speed RAM and fast processor, this SubNote really beats the press! If you like the lighter side of the news, you're going to love the Elite 486SX-33 SubNote.

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- 8-Bay Middle-Tower Case
- 4 ISA, 2 PCI & 1 PCI/ISA Slots
- 101-Key Enhanced Keyboard
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- 8-Bay Middle-Tower Case
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486DX2-50 $1399

#006676

486DX2-66 $1799

#006677

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- 32-Bit VESA Local Bus IDE
- Double Speed CD-ROM Drive
- 3.5" Disk Drive
- 15" SVGA .28 N/I Multi-Scan Color Monitor with Hitachi CRT
- 8-Bay Mini-Tower Case
- 5 ISA & 3 VESA/ISA Slots
- 101-Key Enhanced Keyboard
- MS Mouse
- MS-DOS 6.2 and WFW 3.11

486DX-33 $1679

#007808

486DX2-50 $1699

#007809

DX4-75 $2399

#007826

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- Double Speed CD-ROM Drive
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- 15" SVGA .28 N/I Multi-Scan Color Monitor with Hitachi CRT
- 8-Bay Mini-Tower Case
- 5 ISA & 3 VESA/ISA Slots
- 101-Key Enhanced Keyboard
- MS Mouse
- MS-DOS 6.2 and WFW 3.11

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DX4-100 $2499

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DX4-100 PCI $2999

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- 17" SVGA .26 N/I Color Monitor with Hitachi CRT
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- 3 ISA, 2 PCI & 1 PCI/ISA Slots
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- MS Mouse
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- Pro Audio 16 Sound Card
- Digital Quality, Compact Speakers
- 9624 Internal S/R Fax Modem
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- MS Mouse
- MS-DOS 6.2 and WFW 3.11

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Ask your sales representative how you can upgrade your monitor to a 15" or 17" Elite monitor.

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- Intel® 486, DX2 or DX4 Processor
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- Local Bus Video with 1 Mb Video DRAM
- Business Audio Features Including: Built-in Microphone & Speaker External Jacks for Line In & Line Out
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- User Replaceable Hard Drive
- Two Type II/One Type III PCMCIA Slot
- Built-in Trackball
- NiMH Battery & AC Adapter
- Advanced Power Management with SMI
- One Parallel & One Serial Port
- External VGA & Keyboard Port
- MS-DOS™ 6.2 & WFW™ 3.11
- Lotus Organizer™
- Weight: Mono – 6.2 lbs. Color – 6.7 lbs.
- Carrying Case

Dual Scan Color SoundBook

486SX-33 with 260 Mb HDD
#007328 **$1999**

486DX-33 with 260 Mb HDD
#007329 **$2199**

DX2-50 with 340 Mb HDD
#007330 **$2299**

DX2-66 with 520 Mb HDD
#007331 **$2499**

DX4-75 with 340 Mb HDD & 8 Mb of RAM
#007332 **$2799**

DX4-100 with 520 Mb HDD & 8 Mb of RAM
#007333 **$2999**

Monochrome SoundBook

486SX-33 with 260 Mb HDD
#007334 **$1499**

486DX-33 with 260 Mb HDD
#007335 **$1699**

DX2-50 with 340 Mb HDD
#007336 **$1799**

Active Matrix SoundBook

DX2-66 with 340 Mb HDD & 8 Mb of RAM
#007337 **$3499**

DX4-75 with 520 Mb HDD & 8 Mb of RAM
#007338 **$3799**

DX4-100 with 520 Mb HDD, 8 Mb of RAM & PCMCIA 9624 S/R Fax Modem
#007339 **$3999**

Options

4 Mb RAM Card	#005976	$219
8 Mb RAM Card	#005977	$469
16 Mb RAM Card	#005978	CALL
Car Adapter	#005979	$ 59
PCMCIA 9624 Fax Modem	#001722	$149
PCMCIA 14.4 Fax Modem	#001812	$229
PCMCIA Ethernet Adapter	#001832	$159

* Ask your MidWest Micro sales representative about additional hard drive, screen and processor options.

Elite 486SX SubNote

- Intel 486SX SL-Enhanced Processor
- 4 Mb RAM (expands to 12 Mb)
- 9.5" Mono or Dual-Scan VGA Display
- Turbo Bus Accelerated Video
- 3.5" External Disk Drive
- User Replaceable Hard Drive
- One Type II PCMCIA Slot
- Built-in Trackball
- NiMH Battery & AC Adapter
- Advanced Power Management with SMM
- One Parallel & One Serial Port
- External VGA & Keyboard Port
- MS-DOS 6.2
- Weight: 3.9 lbs.
- Carrying Case

Monochrome SubNote

486SX-25 with 260 Mb HDD
#007342 **$1299**

486SX-25 with 340 Mb HDD & PCMCIA 9624 S/R Fax Modem
#007307 **$1499**

Dual Scan Color SubNote

486SX-33 with 260 Mb HDD & WFW 3.11
#007340 **$1899**

486SX-33 with 340 Mb HDD & WFW 3.11
#007341 **$1999**

Options

4 Mb RAM Card	#005970	$219	PCMCIA 9624 Fax Modem	#001722	$149
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Car Adapter	#005972	$ 65	PCMCIA Ethernet Adapter	#001832	$159

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CACHE MEMORY

	12NS	15NS	20NS	25NS
8Kx8		6 50	6 00	5.50
32Kx8	19 00	9 00	8 00	7 00
64Kx1	–	11 00	9 00	8.00
64Kx4	–	11 00	9.00	8.00
16Kx4		8 00	7 00	6 00
128Kx8		–	39 00	29 00

Intel 8-YEAR Chips

MEMORY FOR IBM & APPLE

	45NS	50NS	70NS	80NS	100NS
1Megx1		7 35	7 25	6 75	5 95
1Megx4		35 00	29 00	27 00	
1Megx4 (Zip Pk)		27 00	25 00	23 00	–
256 x 4 (Video Zip)		–	15 95	11 95	10.95
256x4	8 95	7 95	6 95	–	–
256 x1		4 00	3 50	3 00	2 75
256 x16VRAM–		–	39 00	39 00	–
64x4		–	–	3 25	–
64x1		–	–		2 00

BITTE Math Chips

8087	39 00
8087-2	45.00
8087-1	79 00
80287-XL	49 00
80387-16 DX	39 00
80387-20 DX	44 00
80387-DX (Does All)	74 00
80487-SX (Does All)	299.00
Intel SX (Does All)	69 00
Intel SL Mobil	69 00
Intel 16SX	39 00
Intel 20SX	49 00

AMBRA

Ambra Pentium-60	4/8/16 Meg	175 00/339 00/699 00
Ambra S4540SL	4/16 Meg Kit	CALL
Ambra Sprinta 386, Hurdle 386SX, Enterprise 386 Slim	2/8 Meg Kit	CALL
Ambra Sprinta Hurdle & Enterprise 486	4/16 Meg Kit	CALL
Ambra NC 4255L	2/4/8 Meg	109 00/209 00/449 00
Ambra N Series	4/8/12/16 Meg	189 00/379.00/569 00/829 00
Ambra SN Series	4/16 Meg	189 00/829 00

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Clock Doubler

- Single chip upgrade solution
- Clock doubling technology
- Compatible with industry standard 386DX CPU socket
- Compatible with DOS, Windows, 3;X, OS/2 1.3 and 2.x
- Uses industry standard math chip
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The Cyrix upgrade runs at twice the speed of your original 386 microprocessor combined with a 1K on-chip cache you will enjoy a performance boost of 100% and more Ideal for any DOS, Windows or OS/2 application which requires a large amount of microprocessor horsepower

CX486 DRx²-16/32	269 00
CX486 DRx²-20/40 . .	279.00
CX486 DRx²-25/50 . .	319 00
CX486 DRx²-33/66 ..	359 00
CX486 SRX2 16/32. . . .	249.00
CX486 SRX2 20/40....	249.00
CX486 SRX2 25/50	279 00

SIMM MODULES (Add $5.00 for SIP)

	40NS	50NS	60NS	70NS	80NS	100NS
1Meg x 9 (3 chip)	54 00	52.00	45 00	44 00	42 00	–
1Meg x 9 (9 chip)	54 00	–	48 00	47 00	46 00	40 00
4Meg x 9	–	–	179 00	177 00	168.00	–
16Meg x 9 (9 chip)	–	–	–	719 00	–	–

72 PIN SIMMS (EISA)

1 x 32 4Meg	–	–	189.00	169 00	169 00	–
2 x 32 8Meg			349 00	329 00	329 00	-
4 x 32 16Meg	–	–	659 00	639.00	639.00	–
256 x 36 1Meg	–	–	–	–	59 00	–
512 x 36 2Meg	-	–		94 00	89 00	–
1 x 36 4Meg	–	–	189.00	179.00	168.00	–
2 x 36 8Meg	–	–	379 00	345 00	340 00	–
4 x 36 16Meg			719 00	689 00	689 00	
8 x 36 32Meg	–	–	1539 00	1499 00	1499 00	–
16 x 36 64Meg		-	3629 00	3509 00		–

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MODEL	AMT UPGRADED	AST PART #		PRICE
Bravo LC 4/25S, 4/33, 433S, 4/50d 4/66d	2Meg	500987-001	72 pin	CALL
	4Meg	500987-002		179 00
	8Meg	500987-003		419 00
	16Meg	500987-004		619 00
	32Meg	500987-005		1399.00
Premium 486/25, 25E, 33, 33E				
Premium 386/33TE 486/25TE 33TE				
Premi Serv Premi 386SX/20, 25				
Premi II 386/25 386/33 486/33 486SX/20	8Meg	500780-001	64 pin	398 00
Premium 386 33T Premi 386SX16				
Premi I 386SX/20 25		500780-004		189 00
Premium 386/25 33 386/33T 386SX/16		500780-003		59 00
Premi II 386SX/20 25		500780-001		69 00
Premia 4/33S 4/33 4/50D 4/66D	8Meg	501159-002		379 00
Premia	16Meg	501159-003		789 00
Premia	32Meg	501159-004		1489 00
Premia	64Meg	501159-005		3111 00
AST Expd Bd	0–64Meg	500818-001		179 00

ZENITH MEMORY MODULES

MODEL	AMT. UPGRADED	AST PART #	PRICE
Z386/33 25, 20 33E	1Meg	ZA3800ME	59.00
Z386 33, 25, 20 33E, 486/25E	4Meg	ZA3800MK	180 00
Z386SX	2Meg	Z 605 1 modules	119 00

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IBM PART NO.	WORKS WITH MODEL NO.	PRICE
30F5348 (512K)	30-286	37 00
30F5360 (2Meg)	30-286, 25-286, 50 MTHR BD.	104.00
6450375 (1Meg)	80-041	79.00
6450379 (2Meg)	80-111, 311-121, 321, 081, 161	84.00
6451060 (4Meg)	80-A21, A-61, 80-A31, 80-111, 80-311	89 00
6450604 (2Meg)	70-061, E61, 121 50Z, 55SX, 65SX, P-70, 55LS, 65LS X-Station 120 & 130, 35SX, 35LS, 40SX	89 00
6450608 (2Meg)	70-A21, A-61, B-21, B-61, 35SX, 35LS, 40SX, Val Pt 325T	90 00
78X8955 (128K)	25	35 00
34F2933 (4Meg)	35SX 40SX, 55SX, 65SX, 55LS, 65LS	175 00
87F9977 (4Meg)	55SX 55LS 65SX, 40SX, 35SX, 35LS	175 00
1057035 (512K)	P/S1-286	49 00
92F9935 (2Meg)	P/S1 & P/S1/386SX-2121	109 00
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6450902 (2Meg)	56, 57, 57SX,90, 95 P-75, 57SLC Value Point 77 486DX2, 486SX, SVR 85	90 00
6450128 (4Meg)	57SX 90, 95, P-75, 57SLC, 56, 56SLC, P/S1 386SX, Mod-2123, 2133, 2155, Val Pt 77, 486CS2, 486SX, SVR85 Value Point 77 486DX2, 486SX, SVR 85	175 00
6450129 (8Meg)	35SX, 40SX	339.00
6450130 (8Meg)	56, 57 57SX, 90, 95, P-75 57SLC Value Point 77 486DX2 486SX SVR 85	339 00

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79F0999 (2Meg)	LX40, N33SX PS Note Thinkpad 710T	103 00
79F1000 (4Meg)	LX40, N33SX, PS Note, Tkpd 350 350c, 710T, PS Note 425	199 00
79F1001 (8Meg)	LX40, N33SX, PS Note, Thinkpad 710T	369 00
07G1826 (2Meg)	N51 (all)	103 00
07G1827 (4Meg)	N51 (all)	199 00
07G1828 (8Meg)	N51 (all)	419 00
07G1415 (4Meg)	Thinkpad 750, 750c	199 00
07G1416 (8Meg)	Thinkpad 750, 750c	389 00
66G0094 (16Meg)	Thinkpad 750, 750c	849 00
07G1420 (4Meg)	CL57LSX LpTp Thinkpad 700 700C, 720 720C	199 00
07G1421 (8Meg)	CL57LSX LpTp, Thinkpad 700 700C, 720 720C	389 00
60G0378 (8Meg)	Thinkpad 350, 350c, PS Note 425	359 00
60G0379 (16Meg)	Thinkpad 350, 350c, PS Note 425	669 00
92F8804 (2Meg)	N45SL	109 00

COMPAQ MEMORY MODULES

MODEL	AMT UPGRADED	CMPQ PART #	PRICE
DeskPro 386/33, 386/33L, 486/25, 486/33L, 486/50L, System Pro	2Meg Module	115144 001	139 00
	8Meg Module	116561-001	429 00
	32Meg Module	116568-001	1459 00
DeskPro 386/33L, 486/33L	(Exp Bd)	116569 001	279 00
DeskPro 386/25 386/20	1Meg Module	113131 001	79 00
	4Meg Module	113132 001	199 00
DeskPro 386S-16MHz	1Meg Exp Bd	113633 001	149 00
	4Meg Exp Bd	113634-001	279 00
	1Meg Module	113646-001	79 00
	4Meg Module	112534-001	199 00
DeskPro 386/20E	1Meg Exp Bd	113644-001	149 00
DeskPro 386/25E	4Meg Exp Bd	113645-001	279 00
	1Meg Module	113131 001	79 00
	4Meg Module	113132 001	219.00
DeskPro 286N, 386N, 386SX/20, 386/25M, 486/33M, 486S/25M, 486S/16M	1Meg Module	118689-001	59.00
	2Meg Module	118689-001	89 00
	4Meg Module	118690-001	169 00
Port I Series 486C	8Meg Module	128877 001	389 00
M Series Exp Bd	0-64Meg	129160-001	189 00
DeskPro 386/16	1Meg Kit	108071-001	99 00
	4Meg Kit	108072-001	299 00
	1-2Meg Exp Bd	108069-001	239 00
	4-8Meg Exp Bd	108070 001	437 00
DeskPro 286	512K Kit	113012-001	49 00
DeskPro 5/60, 5/66M, 5/66M Prosignia 5/60 Proliant 100 5/60 Proliant 2000 4/30, 5/66 Proliant 4000 4/50, 5/66 (ALL OF THESE MACHINES USE THESE MODULES)	8Meg Kit	149911-001	389 00
	16Meg Kit	149949-001	707 00
	32Meg Kit	149912-001	1399 00
	64Meg Kit	149913-001	2700 00
	128Meg Kit	149914-001	5900 00
Prolinea 386 3/25S, 3/252S	2Meg	141738-001	109 00
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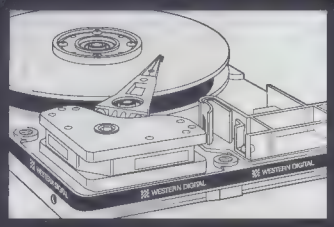

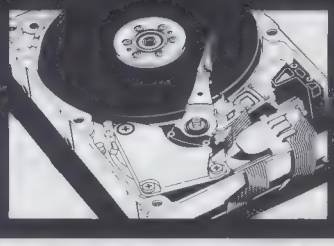

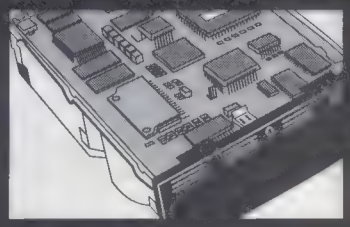

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1740MB	10ms	MC2217	$969
3020MB	11ms	MC1936	$1999
SCSI-AV Audio / Visual tuned drives			
1000MB	10ms	MC2210AV	$829
1700MB	10ms	MC2217AV	$1039
3000MB	11ms	MC1936AV	Call

Seagate

IDE			
213MB	16ms	ST3243A	$204
260MB	16ms	ST3290A	$219
341MB	13ms	ST3391A	$280
452MB	12ms	ST3550A	$295
SCSI (WIDE SCSI also available)			
1690MB	8ms	ST11950N	$1469
2145MB	8ms	ST12550N	$1639
2148MB	9ms	ST12400N	$1399

WESTERN DIGITAL

IDE			
270MB	12ms	AC1270	$229
341MB	12ms	AC2340	$259
425MB	12ms	AC2420	$275
540MB	11ms	AC2540	$379
730MB	10ms	AC2700	$559
1083MB	10ms	AC31000	$739

HARD DRIVES

Quantum

IDE			
170MB	14ms	LPS170A	$199
270MB	12ms	LPS270A	$229
342MB	12ms	LPS340A	$269
541MB	12ms	LPS540A	$379
SCSI			
170MB	14ms	LPS170S	$199
270MB	12ms	LPS270S	$245
342MB	12ms	LPS340S	$272
541MB	12ms	LPS540S	$399
1080MB	10ms	IMP1080	$739
1800MB	10ms	PD1800S	$939
2160MB	9.5ms	IMP2160S	Call

digital

2103MB	9ms	DSP3210	$1369
3500MB	11ms	DSP5350	$2469

IBM PS/1 PS/2 DRIVES

Complete solutions for your IBM. Larger sizes in stock!

	170MB	270MB	340MB
PS/1 386 & 486	$229	$279	$319
PS/2			
25, 30, 30-286	$269	$329	$389
35 & 40	$219	$269	$309
50 thru 95 SCSI	$369	$439	$489
PS/2	210MB	420MB	540MB
50 thru 95 IDE	$419	$589	$719

CONTROLLER CARDS

	Alone	w/Drive
ADAPTEC		
A1522BASIC 16Bit SCSI	$129	$109
A1542CBASIC 16Bit SCSI	$225	$215
A2742 EISA SCSI	$389	$369
A2842 VESA SCSI	$319	$299
FUTURE DOMAIN		
1680SVP 16Bit SCSI	$155	$139
NexStor PCI SCSI	$169	$149
ALPHA RESEARCH CACHING CARDS		
S425I 16Bit IDE	$99	$89
S475I 32Bit Local Bus IDE	$139	$129
S485I 32Bit PCI IDE	$229	$219
S425S 16Bit SCSI	$229	$219
S475S 32Bit Local Bus SCSI	$369	$359

Many other types of controllers in stock.

CD ROM DRIVES

NEC	CDR900	4X	180ms	$979
NEC	CDR510	3X	195ms	$389
Toshiba	XM3401	2X	200ms	$319
Toshiba	XM4101	2X	320ms	$219
Sony	CDU561	2X	295ms	$289
Teac	CD50	2X	265ms	$259

Pioneer External CD Changers (300ms)

DRM602X	6 disc	307KB/sec	$869
DRM604X	6 disc	612KB/sec	$1149
DRM1804X	18 disc	612KB/sec	$2059

MULTIMEDIA KITS

SCSI Drive, sound card (in retail pkg)
MV=Media Vision Pro Audio 16. MS=Media Vision Pro Studio 16
SB= Sound Blaster 16 SCSI. SA= Sound Blaster SCSI ASP.

	MV	MS	SB	SA
XM4101	$359	$389	$419	$459
CD50	$399	$429	$449	$489
CDU561	$429	$459	$469	$519
XM3401	$459	$489	$519	$559
CDR510	$509	$539	$579	$609
CDR900	$1119	$1149	$1159	$1199

CD ROM TOWERS

CD ROM Drive Towers - Multiple CD ROM drives in a single external enclosure. Great for networks, BBS, or business.

	2 Drive	4 Drive	7 Drive
XM4101	$579	$1259	$2249
CD50	$649	$1389	$2479
CDU561	$699	$1479	$2639
XM3401	$789	$1659	$2999
CDR510	$939	$1999	$3499
CDR900	$2119	$4339	$7489

BUNDLE SPECIALS WITH ANY CD DRIVE PURCHASE!

Free $25 ADI Photo CD processing coupon with each CD ROM Drive!
6 Title CD Bundle $69
Illustrated Encyclopedia, World Atlas, Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing, San Diego Zoo's Animals, US Atlas, Chessmaster 3000)
Caddies $5 Macintosh CD Driver $29
Altec Lansing ACS-100 Speakers $109

HARD DISK CARDS

Drive & controller on card. Saves drive bay. Compatible with XT, AT, Tandy, PS/2 and others. Super easy installation! IDE

170MB	$259	270MB	$319
340MB	$359	540MB	$499

TAPE DRIVES

IOMEGA

250MB QIC-80 tape drives include 5YR warranty, software, 1 tape

	Alone	w/drive
Internal fits 3.5 or 5.25 bay	$159	$149
External for printer port	$319	$309

3 Pack of IOMEGA formatted DC2120 tapes $40 with any purchase!

SCSI Tape Drives

Kit is 16Bit card & 1 tape			Bare	Kit
750-15Gig	Exabyte	2501	$549	$739
2Gig	Conner	4320	$799	$969
2Gig	HP	35470	$929	$1049
4-8Gig	Conner	4324	$1119	$1329
4-8Gig	HP	35480	$1059	$1279
4-16Gig	Sony	SDT5000	$1099	$1299
4-16Gig	HP	C1533A	$1499	$1699

OPTICAL DRIVES

Smart STORAGE SOLUTIONS

High quality, High Performance optical drive solutions include controller, and 1 disk.
Get "Dare to Compare" FAX

128MB $769 230MB $979 1300MB $2499
HP & Maxoptix drives & media in stock.
Verbatim Optical Media (Qty 5 price)
128MB / 650MB / 1.3Gig $35 / $77 / $105

MISCELLANEOUS

	Alone	w/HD
TEAC Floppy Drives		
Floppy 1.4 (1.2 + $9)	$45	$42
Floppy Combo 1.2 & 1.4	$115	$105
Maxtor 105MB PCMCIA drive	$429	
PCMCIA to SCSI adapter	$319	
Desktop Docking Module! Mounts in 5 1/4" drive bay. Allows you to use any PCMCIA in your desktop	$159	

MEGA HAUS HARD DRIVES
1110 NASA Rd 1 #306
Houston, Texas 77058

1-800-786-1187

Ad. Code # CA71 Sales Hours (Central Standard Time)
8am - 7pm Monday thru Friday 9am - 3pm Saturday
FAX (713) 333-3024 Local (713) 333-1910
We sell within the United States, its territories, and Canada (sorry no international orders)

VISA MasterCard DISCOVER AMERICAN EXPRESS

NO SURCHARGE
We accept Fortune 500 & Government bids & P.O.'s
We check for COD and Credit Card fraud!

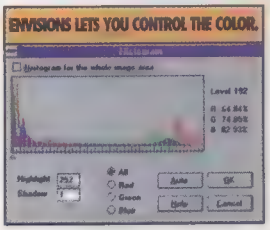
Prices & specifications subject to change without notice. Shipping charges are nonrefundable. Returns must be in new condition and in original packaging. Defaced items may not be returnable. No refunds on software or special order items not listed in ad.) All refunds subject to 15% restocking fee. All trademarks are registered trademarks of their respective companies. Personal checks take 4 weeks to clear. We reserve the right to refuse any sale for any reason. © 1994

Circle 105 on reader service card.

Envisions' Color Scanners Pack More Performance than Hewlett Packard's!

VS.

After evaluating a host of desktop scanners, *PC Computing* placed the Envisions ENV8100 right at the top of the list for best color scans. We beat HP and the rest of the pack by equipping our scanners with a superior dynamic range. This engineering feat gives you what few others can match: a more thorough color sampling of your image – for richer, more true-to-life output.



VS.

HEWLETT PACKARD DOESN'T.

Are We Missing Something?

Envisions puts you in precise control of color correction, even before you've finished scanning – by letting you preview an image's color values in a simple graph format. This makes it easier to "fine-tune" the Reds, Greens, and Blues in any area of your image, for true color-correcting capabilities that you probably thought were only available to you after the scanning process or from an image-editing program.

VS.

If you scan a photo from a magazine, newspaper, catalog – or scan any image that's been printed with a screen or dot pattern, Be Careful! If you aren't using an Envisions scanner, you might be in for some plug-ugly photos. Screening already-screened art can distort the look of your image, creating an undesirable "moiré" pattern. Our Descreening feature prevents this effect BEFORE you finish scanning, saving you lots of editing time later.

Scanner Model PART #	ENV6100 EST3081B	ENV8100 EST3083B	ENV24Pro EST3087B	HP ScanJet IIcx
Base Resolution Max. Resolution	300 x 600 dpi 1200 dpi	400 x 800 dpi 1600 dpi	600 x 1200 dpi 2400 dpi	400 x 400 dpi 1600 dpi
Color Recognition	16.7 million colors	16.7 million colors	16.7 million colors	16.7 million colors
Price	$499	$699	$999	$993*
Price/Performance Comparison	About Half the Price of the HP ScanJet IIcx	Judged Better Color than the HP ScanJet IIcx by PC Computing April, 1994	A Whopping 50% Higher Resolution than the HP ScanJet IIcx for the Same Price	You'll Spend More Money, but Get Less Performance

Envisions scanners are available bundled with Adobe Photoshop 2.5 or COREL Draw. For pricing information, call our toll-free number today.

The Evidence is *Positively* Overwhelming!

Space prohibits us from showing you all of the many important reasons why you'll choose an Envisions scanner over an HP. Call us today to receive a complete list of Envisions scanner benefits!

†Source: PC Computing, April 1994, comparison of the ENV8100 and the HP ScanJet IIcx™

*Average of 3 prices quoted by COMPUSA stores on 5/3/94.

©1994 Envisions Solutions Technology, Inc. All rights reserved and trademarks acknowledged. Prices and specs subject to change. Please call for system requirements.

ONLY AVAILABLE BY CALLING OUR SCANNER HOTLINE:

1-800-926-SCAN

QUESTIONS? WE LOVE QUESTIONS!℠ LOCAL 415-692-9061 FAX: 415-692-9064

TWAIN Compatibility

Celebrating 5 YEARS in Scanning

ENVISIONS

Scanner Solutions Made Easy

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Advertising Account Representatives

Thomas Koletas	Southeast Territory	212-503-3674
Kevin Tracey	Northeast Territory	212-503-5102
Jonathan Schwartz	Northwest Territory	212-503-5101
Thomas Lee	Southwest Territory	212-503-5114
Erik Matlick	Midwest Territory	212-503-5142

National Advertising Staff 1-800-825-4237

Robert A. Bader VP, Central Advertising
Thomas Koletas Asst. Sales Manager
Bessi Dion Asst. Prod. Manager
Tricia Maguire Sr Ad Coordinator

Windows/Premier

The color showcase that puts the spotlight on leading-edge PC products and services.

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Classified

Flexible-format display advertising: computer systems, components, software and more.

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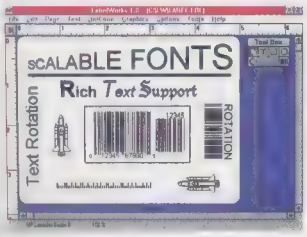
The Next Generation in Label Design Software

LabelWorks™ for Windows



LabelWorks sets the new performance standard for professional quality label design. No other program combines such easy operation with this much power!

- Provides Desktop Publishing features to enhance label design. Features include: WYSIWYG, rulers, guides, page zooms, lines, shapes.
- Rich text support allows you to edit font styles, types, and sizes within the same line.
- Supports all major Bar Code symbologies, including Code 39, 93, 128, POSTNET, UPC, Bookland EAN. 19 types in all.
- Imports & Exports using TIFF, GIF, BMP, PCX, WPG, WMF, TARGA graphic files.
- Rotates Text, Bar Codes and imported graphics in 90 degree increments.
- Prints labels on virtually any windows supported printer.
- Prints labels directly from dBase, DIF & ASCII files.

Dealer Inquiries Welcome.

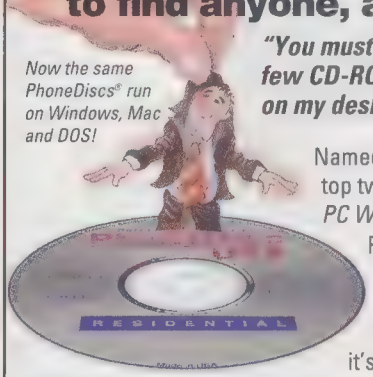
Call for Free DEMO Software

AMERICAN MICROSYSTEMS
2190 Regal Parkway, Euless, TX 76040
(800) 648-4452 (817) 571-9015 FAX (817) 685-6232

THE LEADING PC MAGAZINES AGREE:

PhoneDisc® is the fastest way to find anyone, anywhere!

Now the same PhoneDiscs® run on Windows, Mac and DOS!



"You must buy this....one of the few CD-ROM sets that I keep on my desk." *–John Dvorak,* PC MAGAZINE.

Named one of *PC Computing*'s top two business CDs; one of *PC World*'s top twenty-five, PhoneDisc® has 91 million total listings, 21 million more than its leading competitor – and it's 50% more accurate.

RESIDENTIAL $79 Find 81 million numbers, addresses, even zip codes in a fraction of the time, and at a fraction of the cost of directory assistance calls. Download, print and dial.

BUSINESS $79 Identify 9.5 million business names from just a phone number or street address; business type or SIC code.

PowerFinder™ $249 The master investigative tool™ with over 91 million listings. Developed for government agencies. Features include search by number and address of 91 million residential and business listings on five regional discs.

1-800-284-8353

PhoneDisc® USA Digital Directory Assistance, Inc 6931 Arlington Rd Suite 405 Bethesda, MD 20814-5231

The fastest way to find anyone, anywhere!

CIRCLE 401 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Persuasion And Negotiation Software

WINFLUENCE!

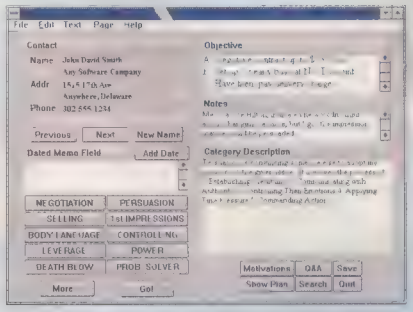
THE SOFTWARE VERSION OF "HOW TO INFLUENCE PEOPLE"™

GAIN CONTROL WITH WINFLUENCE

10 Ways to make people instantly like you
17 Formulas for projecting powerful charisma
12 Techniques for controlling other people
9 Ways to get people to talk about themselves
21 Ways of finding out important facts
5 Complete systems for starting conversations
A 7-step procedure for getting information
5-steps that make your viewpoint standout
The 9 Stages of Negotiation

Winfluence uses hundreds of strategies and scenarios to create your detailed influence blueprint. Each plan includes specific *techniques, tactics, actions* and exact *phrases & gestures* to use to get what you want.

- Never take "no" for an answer
- Make them glad they said "yes"!
- Impress people, start new relationships easily
- Silence your critics
- Resolve disagreements in your favor



Full contact manager! 20 Powerful Categories!

TAKE-THE-EDGE WITH CONFIDENCE

- Simple ways to make people like you
- Step-by-step conversation guidelines
- Professional negotiation strategies
- Keys to gaining instant credibility
- How to find the bottom line in every deal

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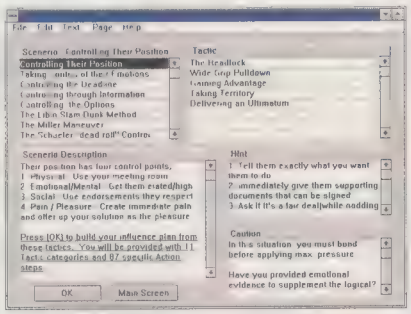
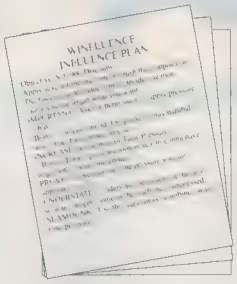


This screen leads to thousands of specific actions

SOFTWARE MAKES IT SIMPLE

By using WINFLUENCE you can impress people the right way, put enthusiasm and powerful charisma into every conversation, apply time pressure to create instant influence and easily communicate with confidence & authority. Winfluence will show you the right way to make eye contact, and how to use body language to your advantage. You'll handle emotionally charged situations to your benefit and easily outwit your competition. Wouldn't you like to know which people really like you? How much a customer is willing to pay for your product? What impresses someone you're interested in? How to get information from someone who doesn't want to give it to you? With Winfluence, you'll take advantage of all these opportunities!



HOW DOES IT WORK?

Winfluence uses a *point-and-click* system to isolate your problems and then it identifies Strategies, Tactics and Specific Actions from which your "Plan-of-Influence" is created. Winfluence uses only Researched & Tested Methods, including the basic techniques of the great persuaders. Men such as Carnegie, Jung, Churchill, Rockford, Schwab and Klaff, *the Boston Bulldog*.

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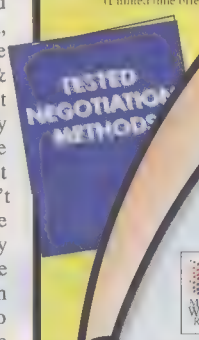

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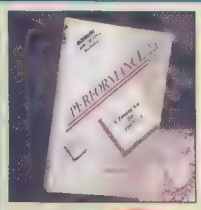

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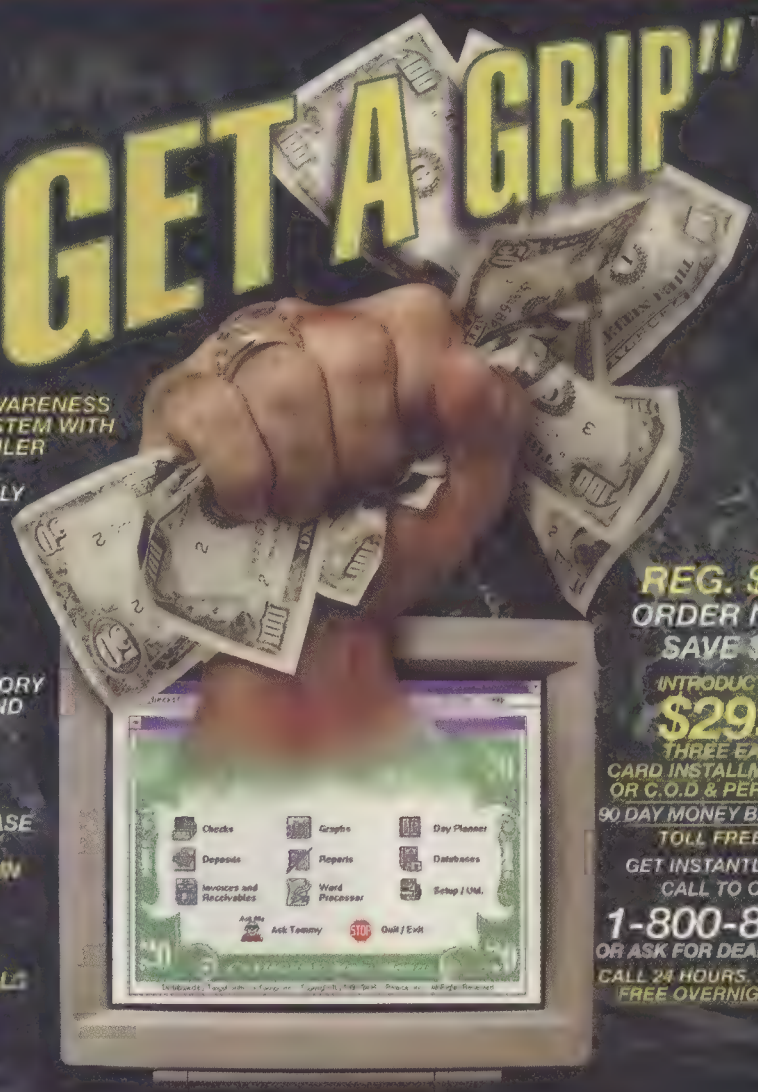

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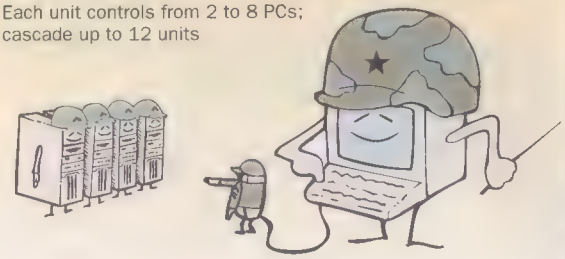

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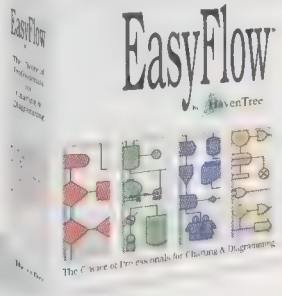

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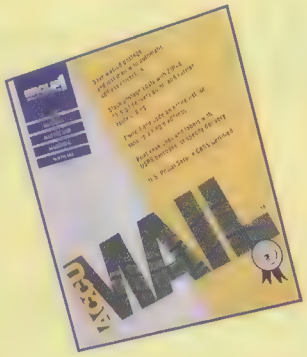

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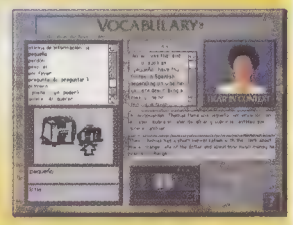

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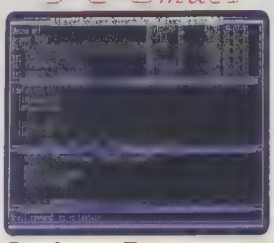

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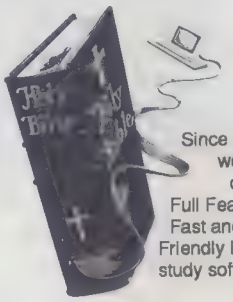

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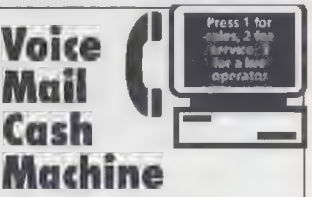

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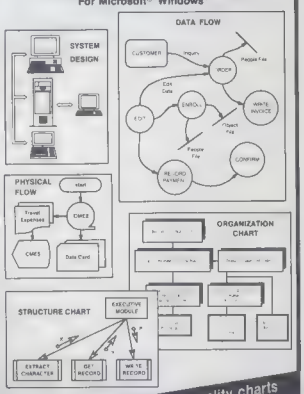

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PHOTOGRAPH BY GEOFFREY NELSON

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Doom / id Software / (800) 434-2637 / $40
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YST-M10 / Yamaha / (714) 522-9240 / $149
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Sound Blaster AWE32 / Creative Labs / (408) 428-6600 / $399
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Big Screen: To lose yourself in 3-D, get Mitsubishi's Diamond Pro 21T (center), a 21-inch behemoth with a crystal display and Windows remote-control software for power management and display options.

Diamond Pro 21T / Mitsubishi Electronics / (800) 843-2515 / $2,525
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Make It So: We've seen the effects of repetitive strain—and found the solution. The Floating Arms Keyboard chair supports elbows, wrists, and fingers—just what touch typists need. It looks cool, too.

Floating Arms Keyboard / Workplace Design / (612) 439-4474 / $1,295
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BY MATTHEW J. LAKE

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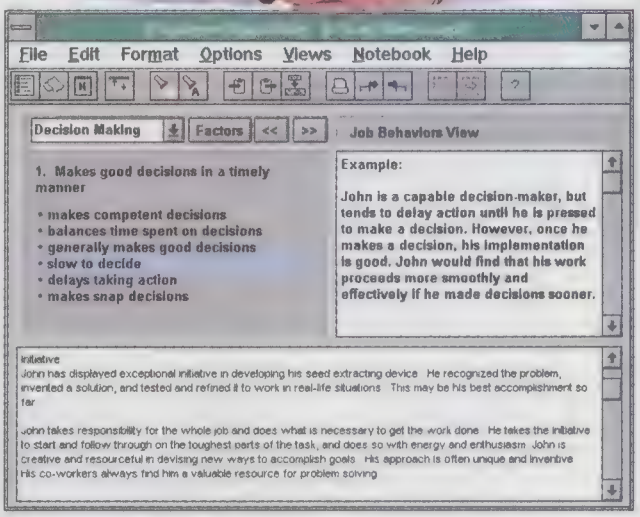

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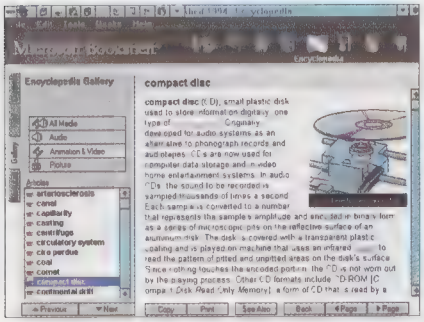
CD-RONWhite

Spin a Book

What CD-ROM needs is a killer app. Not just something good, but something that would convince your boss or spouse that a CD would actually *save* money. That title has finally arrived, along with a bunch of fun, weird, and wacky discs—the *real* reasons we want a new CD-ROM drive.



Mo' Better Books: Bookshelf throws you a title-bar full of reference books.

MICROSOFT BOOKSHELF 1994 EDITION ●●●●

Bookshelf's collection of reference books promised to be CD-ROM's killer app when it first came out years ago. But the interface was clunky and the choice of works puzzling. This edition lives up to its early promise—almost.

The roster of new references is impressive: *The Columbia Dictionary of Quotations* features spoken versions of many famous quotes. Then there's *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language,* which pronounces more than 80,000 of its 350,000 words. Two other newcomers, *The Original Roget's Thesaurus* and *The People's Chronology,* join three new editions of updated books: *The Concise Columbia Encyclopedia, The Hammond World Atlas,* and *The World Almanac and Book of Facts 1994.*

The number of video bites and animations is a paltry 60, but what the hey. With a new and easy interface, a Windows toolbar called QuickShelf for quick and easy access to any or all references, and wicked-fast searches, what more do you want?

Two things, actually. Bookshelf's handy menu item to copy a reference entry directly into Word for Windows isn't enough—what about WordPerfect and Ami Pro? Also, when you paste in an entry, Bookshelf adds a three- to five-line copyright notice that is some lawyer's idea of a good read. This is not a benefit for Bookshelf users, and whenever a CD goes out of its way to hassle people, it won't get our coveted five-disk rating.

Microsoft Bookshelf 1994 Edition / Microsoft Corp. / (800) 426-9400 / (206) 939-8661 / $99
Circle No. 771 on Reader Service Card

REDSHIFT ●●●●

If you don't have an abiding interest in the stars, you may think RedShift is an elaborate waste of time. But if you're that jaded, you'll miss a beautiful, fascinating experience. RedShift is not your average Windows astronomy program—we've seen those before and were nearly hospitalized with the yawns. Anything you could want from a pumped-up planetarium—from vast panoramas to low, sweeping flybys over alien terrain—you can get from RedShift. The color photography is beautiful, and the way it lets you play with the universe is totally absorbing. This is an elaborate use—not waste—of time.

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RedShift / Maris Multimedia / (800) 336-0185 / $64.95
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MCGRAW-HILL MULTIMEDIA ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY ●●●

You have to be a major wonk to get off on this vast repository of science—and that's not a knock. Everyone at *PC Computing* is fairly wonky, and all of us who saw it were impressed. But despite its well-done narrated animations and illustrations, which explain science in ways words alone could never do, this is still not a CD for everyone. The text is more akin to *Scientific American* than *Discover,* and you'll find lots of references to analog computers but none to IBM or Intel (which is actually a pleasant change). You've got to have a serious need for the Multimedia Encyclopedia of Science & Technology to cough up the $1,300 price, but if you have such a need, it's still $600 cheaper than the 20-volume printed version. So weigh this: $1,300 will buy this disc or every multimedia game in the known universe. Which you would rather buy tells you if you're a true wonk or just a wonk impersonator.

McGraw-Hill Multimedia Encyclopedia of Science & Technology / McGraw-Hill / (800) 233-1128 / $1,300
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●●●●● *Trade in your firstborn for this one* ●●●● *Trade in your second-born*
●●● *This pup's a keeper* ●● *OK for now* ● *OK for Frisbee practice*

PHOTOGRAPH BY JAMES McGOON

CD-RONWhite

Do I Hear Six Million? In Millennium Auction, eavesdropping is key.

MILLENNIUM AUCTION

What's this? An intelligent, nonviolent game for adults that's really fun to play? Millennium Auction has the appeal of classic Monopoly combined with the modern pizazz of multimedia. It allows up to four players to compete in a future bidding war for real and fictional pieces of art, as well as artifacts of history such as Bill Clinton's sax and the first pair of sexual androids. Interspersed with the bidding are radio, TV, and news reports that may affect the value of the objects when the players later sell them on the open market. The winner is the person whose purchases garner the most wealth.

This Windows CD adds fantastic 3-D CAD animations and imaginative settings that give it a certain virtual-reality touch. All this is coupled with wit and satire (Marilyn Quayle is head of an international version of the NEA). There were only two flaws in the beta version we tested. One is intentional: The game is designed to last only an hour or so, which left me wanting more. The second is accidental: There's a virtually surefire loophole to win—if winning is more important to you than playing the game. What is the loophole? I'll never tell.

Millennium Auction / Eidolon / (718) 884-7095 / $69.95
Circle No. 774 on Reader Service Card

GUS GOES TO CYBERTOWN

Send the grown-ups out of the room. This Windows CD is for children only—the younger, the better. Gus Goes to CyberTown is a click-and-surprise exploratorium in the tradition of Arthur's Teacher Trouble: Kids click on various objects on the screen and are treated to a game, a video, a bit of slapstick comedy—or sometimes a spoken and syrupy homily ("Cyberbugs are always cool and share with others"). Although supposedly for ages three to seven, any kid old enough to say "Mortal Kombat" will scoff at the simple cartoons and games that teach fundamental skills, such as working with shapes. But for toddlers and preschoolers, it's a fine find. One complaint: A human chronology gives the impression that "pre-man," whatever that is, lived at the same time as the dinosaurs.

Gus Goes to CyberTown / Modern Media Ventures / (800) 530-5080 / (415) 546-1515 / $39.95
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JOB POWER SOURCE

Unhappy with your job? Don't even have a job? Job Power Source will do one of two things for you: Either it will lead you through an intense process of self-examination to your true calling, or you'll spend so much time reading the CD's 11 books, watching its videos, and filling out questionnaires that you won't have time to worry about your current employment situation.

Job Power Source is not a cure-all for your job woes. It won't analyze your answers and spin out the perfect solution. It requires a lot of input and thought. But if you don't get a new job after exploring its material on interviews, résumés, letters, and the best job markets, then just forget it and go on welfare.

Job Power Source / Infobusiness / (800) 657-5300 / (801) 221-1100 / $49.95
Circle No. 776 on Reader Service Card

DENNIS MILLER THAT'S NEWS TO ME

OK, listen up. It's this simple: You think Dennis Miller is the coolest newscaster since Paul Revere, and you want the ability to select the topics he tells jokes about. Got a few sawbucks for this Windows CD? Then buy it. But if you think Dennis-baby is a relentless esoterica-dropper who will go catatonic in a few years when that mane of his falls out and he starts looking like Gabby Hayes, forget it.

Dennis Miller That's News to Me / Sanctuary Woods / (800) 943-3664 / (415) 578-6340 / $29.95
Circle No. 777 on Reader Service Card

THE EXOTIC GARDEN

There's a fundamental flaw in this disc: You can't haul a multimedia PC through the narcissus and calla lilies. But I like The Exotic Garden all the same. The photographs of flowers and plants are beautiful. The narrated, time-lapse video of growing plants is fascinating and informative. And you can create lists of plants based on their ease of growth and preferred climates, then read in detail about the ones that match your criteria.

Might as well admit it. The reason I like the CD is that I'm entering that awkward phase of middle-age: Too old for Motorhead, too young for Manilow. At this stage, some primal instinct makes me want to grow a garden. But I'll never feel the same about eating a tomato now that I've been told it's a swollen ovary.

The Exotic Garden / VT Productions / (408) 464-1552 / $49.95
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IN THE COMPANY OF WHALES

The Discovery Channel wants you to watch several tons of blubber swimming in a window the size of a can of tuna. Fortunately, In the Company of Whales is much better than it sounds. Based on the documentary of the same name, it shows just about everything you'd want to know about whales in photos, video, and animation. Only one complaint: The section on whale singing has someone talking over all the songs. He should shut up and let the whales sing for themselves.

In the Company of Whales / Discovery Communications / (301) 986-0444 / $49.95
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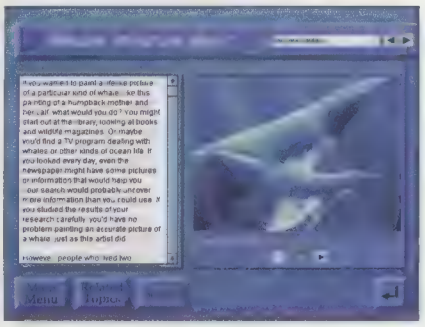

Massive Marine Mammals: The Discovery Channel's CD cetaceans.

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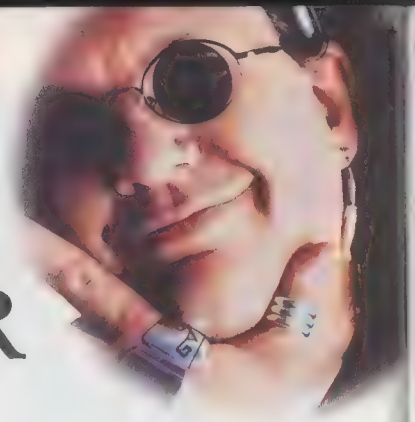

I'M A VIRTUAL STAR

I've been grumbling forever about "virtual reality." I really wish Jaron Lanier's claim to fame was having the best dreads on a white guy (even counting Uma Thurman's ex-husband in *True Romance*), not that coinage. Jaron's great, but man, VR? Who needs that noise? A nice idea for displaying information was turned into some nonexistent diabolical world that is supposed to be qualitatively different from other showbiz. What a crock.

My writer friend, Thania St. John, was writing a Fox pilot about VR. She thought that since I wrote a computer column (people who don't read me regularly—like my editors—think I write a computer column), I could tell her about VR. I told her VR is watching one TV with each eye while wearing a funny hat and glove. So she wrote a pilot where VR means psychedelic clown makeup and everyone's on fire. Showbiz.

VR TV There was a part for a big, long-haired, obnoxious neighbor, and they didn't even audition anyone but me. They called it *Avenging Angel,* but that was already a movie (as I remember it, high-school student by day, kung fu prostitute by night—it was a sequel starring Betsy Russell, who, except for marrying a Van Patten, could have been mentioned on this page as often as Gary Oldman's ex-wife). It then became *The V.R. Project,* but if Fox ever shows it, you can bet it'll probably be called something like *Virtual Strangers.*

Lori Singer (*Footloose,* and naked in *Short Cuts*) plays a phone repair person (she had a prop tool belt) who is able to call people on the phone and pull them into "VR." In VR, she has colorful adventures, finds out more about herself, and has sexual tension with wiseacres—just as in pre-VR TV.

My character gets pulled into VR, which means they really hanged *me* on a 90-foot crane over Santa Monica and they really lit *me* on fire. It's me on fire—you can see my face—but there was a stuntman for the sexual tension. From each according to his ability, to each according to her need.

License to Kill? Is this a good thing? Is it good for me to help make the words *virtual reality* nothing more than a goofy TV premise? Is this an efficient way to stop the nuts like the Washington State government from a bill that goes something like this? (I didn't make this up.)

"NEW SECTION. Sec. 706 (1) A license is required for the commercial use of virtual-reality technology for entertainment or purposes other then bona fide education, training, research, and development."

Where VR is defined: "NEW SECTION. Sec. 702 (4) 'Virtual Reality' means any computer or other electronic technology that creates an enhanced illusion of three-dimensional, real-time, or near–real-time interactive reality through the use of software, specialized hardware, holograms, gloves, masks, glasses, computer guns, or other items capable of producing visual, audio, and sensory effects of verisimilitude beyond those available with a personal computer."

The flame on the Net is that Senator Phil Talmadge and his crew are trying to convince the Washington state legislature that VR will permit someone to create a realistic illusion of killing another person, and that such an illusion will make it easier for someone to go and actually commit such a crime outside of VR. It's all part of the current sociopathic movement to reduce violence by muzzling artists.

Nonexistent **DIABOLICAL WORLD** *. . . Where* **VR** *means* **PSYCHEDELIC** *clown makeup . . . It'll be like banning Superman's* **X-RAY VISION.**

So let's fight fire with fire. (Did I mention that I was really on fire? This whole page should be about me being on fire, but they didn't use computers, they used petroleum products and a lighter.) If politicians don't know fiction when it bites them, let's give them *The VR Pilot.* It's funny and exciting, and has nothing to do with reality. It's taking kitsch-phrase hype and then turning out comic-book technology. And if anything can take the reality out of virtual reality, TV can do it. If political leeches want to ban the kind of VR they see on this show, that's fine. It'll be like banning Superman's X-ray vision.

I hope I did the right thing. I hope the check clears.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JAMES McGOON ILLUSTRATION BY GERALD FRAMPTON

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